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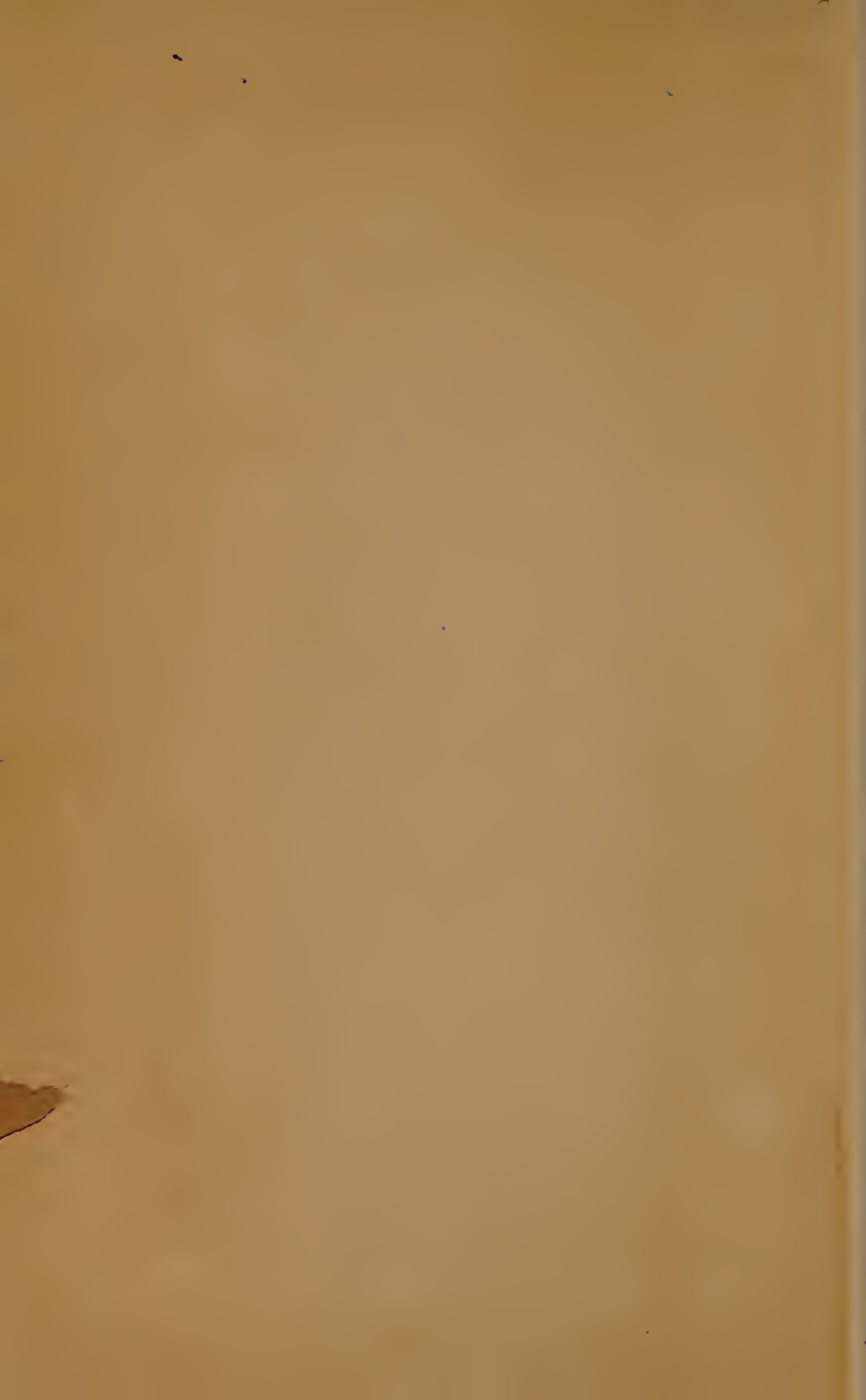


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ADVENTURESSES AND ADVENTUROUS LADIES

By
EDMUND B. D'AUVERGNE

WITH SIXTEEN FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

THE women whose stories are told here belong to various ages, nations, and orders of society. They point a doubtful moral, but, as I think, they all make a good tale. A considerable amount of research has gone towards the making of this book. Catalina de Erauso, the fighting woman of King Philip's time, is quite unknown to the English reader ; and though a translation of her spurious autobiography was published by Dr. Fitzmaurice Kelly, this is the first attempt in any language to get at the true facts of her extraordinary career. As regards the Russian pretender, Tarakanova, hardly better known, I may claim almost as much—I have consulted the Russian state papers in their German translation and have thus been enabled to correct many errors in the few French and English notices of the adventuress. The grievous tale of Mary Carleton, which interested Mr. Pepys, is now once more told to the public after an interval of two hundred and sixty years. About Lola Montez, I have collected a good many new facts, mostly communicated by private correspondents in India, America, and Australia, since my life of her was published eighteen years ago. Even where no fresh material is available, I have approached the subject in a critical spirit and have endeavoured to present old facts in a new and, as it seems to me, the true light.

Knowing the loyalty of the public to its old favourites, I make no apology for once more telling the story of Nelson's Emma. Some will be glad to meet her familiar face in a gallery mostly given up to strangers.

EDMUND B. D'AUVERGNE.

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A PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE ON ADVENTURESSES

WHAT is an adventuress? In Victorian days, if the drama correctly mirrors them, she could be recognized at once. She was nearer thirty than twenty, she perched on the edge of a table, she smoked cigarettes, and introduced little bits of French into her conversation. Generally, she called herself Mrs. or Madame Somebody. In Thackeray's day, she seems to have driven about in a brougham; in Wilkie Collins's time, the minx wouldn't have hesitated about driving down Pall Mall in a hansom. She was found in great numbers at the Star and Garter, Richmond, at Maidenhead, and in even greater numbers, at Monte Carlo and Homburg. As to Paris—well, wasn't every Parisienne more or less an adventuress?

But by none of these outward and visible marks of inward disgrace can we identify any of the women who would be so much surprised to find themselves brought together in this book. Lola Montez was certainly seen by George Augustus Sala sitting on a tub in a cigar divan, smoking what he so often called "a fragrant weed"; and George's connexion with the stage was so intimate that the question arises whether the theatrical conception of the adventuress may not have been determined for all time in Norreys Street, Haymarket, on that historic occasion. On the whole, Lola was true to type.

But it is to be doubted whether any of the others even smoked (the Nun Ensign conceivably might), and it is certain that none of them drove in a hansom. So we must still seek for a definition which shall embrace them. "Adventuress—a female person who adventures." At first glance, that strikes one as the obvious definition. No; it is not narrow enough. A woman lion tamer adventures; so do the numerous ladies who nowadays traverse Africa or Kamchatka or Patagonia on stilts or in a wheelbarrow and return to tell us, so delightfully, all about it; but they would properly resent being called adventureses. Adventure in this sense—risk the perils of flood and field, war and shipwreck—three of my heroines, Catalina de Erauso, Théroigne, and the indomitable Lola, again certainly did; but this test would rule out the others.

Let us fall back on our transpontine drama. The stage dictionary, I am told, defines an adventuress thus: "An abandoned and attractive female of foreign origin who exploits the animal passions of man to her own advantage and generally to their disadvantage." This is good, quite good. Once more, we identify Lola Montez as the true-blue, dyed-in-the-wool adventuress; Mary Carleton seems to belong. About the Circassian girl, I am not so sure. Men had a habit of falling in love with her, and she did not disdain their help to further her ambitions; but then—would any woman? At the beginning of her career, Emma Hamilton appears to me to have been rather exploited than exploiting. Indeed, at moments she reminds us of the Betrayed Maiden, also a familiar theatrical character. But as regards Nelson, she played the part of the designing female right enough. Elizabeth Chudleigh, it is to be suspected, was not above practising on men's natural instincts; otherwise, why did

she go to the ball dressed only in a wreath of fig-leaves? Yet her very able and conscientious biographer, the late Mr. Charles Pearce, hotly challenges anyone to call her an adventuress. Thérèse Humbert, that sublime creature, while setting an example of conjugal virtue to all France, must also be convicted of practising on men's passions—this time, the passions of greed and ambition.

Thus early, I see that I must give up my search for a definition which shall, as a proper definition should, exclude all accidentals and include all essentials. For the first woman on my list was a sexless creature who fought as a soldier and dressed like a man; two of the others were crooks, living in different ages and practising very different methods; another, gentlest and most lovable of them all, aimed at nothing less than an imperial crown and died miserably; Elizabeth Chudleigh was a young English lady, moving in court circles, who was satisfied with a ducal coronet and got it—and some thousands, to boot; “brown-locked Théroigne” was a real heroine; Emma Hamilton and Lola Montez, women whose beauty gained them place and power, which the one used ill, the other well. Yet, somehow, the description “adventuress” seems to fit them all.

The character combines in varying degrees the attributes of the adventurer, the courtesan, the impostor, and the insurgent. In Lola and Emma, the two first predominated—they were not too nice about their “virtue” (Emma always respected it, she assures us, but couldn't always do with it), and they liked to play a part in men's affairs. In Catalina, who was all adventurer and, as I maintain, impostor, there was nothing of the courtesan. Théroigne was all insurgent and adventurer and not more than one per cent courtesan. Mary Carleton was pre-eminently the impostor. The misnamed

“Princess Tarakanova” may have been an impostor, but she certainly wasn’t a courtesan, and she played for higher stakes than any of the others, though with much less relish, I suspect, than Lola, Emma, and Théroigne. Really one cannot find that these women had any more than this in common—that they measured their wits against men’s in ages when woman was tied down to a subordinate rôle, and that they excited the half-respectful astonishment of their male contemporaries. Hence the double title of this book. You can decide for yourself which were the adventureses and which the adventurous ladies.

ADVENTURESSES AND ADVENTUROUS LADIES

THE NUN ENSIGN

(CATALINA DE ERAUSO)

I

THE woman warrior has been a favourite figure in legend and romance ever since, perhaps, the primitive squaw fought with tooth and nail beside her mate in defence of the family cave. In every age and every land, there must have been women who fought and looked war in the face. In the Middle Ages, it is true, stout arms as well as stout hearts were needed to wield axes and swords of iron and to draw the cloth-yard shaft. Joan of Arc, we know, burst on the vision of her contemporaries as a thing of God or devil, not merely human. But when heavy armour was laid aside and muskets replaced cross-bows, women began to find their way back to the battlefield.

In fact, from the sixteenth century onwards, the woman soldier ceases to be a marvel. Paraguay had its corps of amazons in the war against Brazil; there were franc-tireur corps in the Franco-German war which had girl officers in *opéra-bouffe* uniforms; there were rumours of a women's legion fighting on the Russian front in the last war. Apart from these, there can be hardly an army which at one time or another has not borne some woman disguised as a man on

its muster-roll. We can point to our Christian Davis, our Hannah Snell, and our Mary Ann Talbot, "the drummer-boy," who all wore the King's scarlet and acquitted themselves bravely during the eighteenth century. Much, too much, was made of these women's achievements by journalists of their own time. For martial prowess they must yield the palm, or rather the laurel, to a Spanish woman, whose fame echoed over two continents in the reign of our James I, who had for a background the sunset glory of Spanish history.

She went by the name of Catalina de Erauso—to her countrymen, perhaps, she is better known as the Nun Ensign (*la Monja Alferez*). For she is reputed to have exchanged not merely a woman's frock but the religious habit for the doublet and breeches of the soldier. That distinction of itself lifts her far above the Christian Davieses and Hannah Snells. But that she was entitled to that distinction, or even to the name under which she has been ever known, seems to me impossible, or at best extremely improbable. She remains not only one of the prodigies but one of the enigmas of history.

Let one of her contemporaries introduce her.

In July, 1626, Pietro della Valle, one of the most adventurous travellers of his day, writes from Rome to his friend Mario Schipano: "On July 5th, I was visited for the first time by the Ensign Catalina de Erauso, a Biscayner from Spain, who had arrived in Rome the day previous. She is a woman now between the ages of thirty-five and forty; well born; who, while quite a child, was put into a convent in her own country and as some believe, took the habit; but before she could be professed, being disgusted with the cloistered life and determined to live as a man, she ran away, disguised as a boy. She served as a page for a few days at

the court of Spain . . . thence she found her way to the Indies and followed the life of a soldier, being naturally inclined to arms and to see the world."

Pietro goes on to give a general account of her military career, observes that she prefers men's society to women's, and concludes with her description: "She is of tall stature and big for a woman, but everyone would take her for a man. Breasts she has none—as a girl, she told me, she got rid of them by some treatment which was painful at first but had no permanently injurious effect. Her face is neither ugly nor handsome, but hard-bitten. Her hair is black and short, like a man's, and pomaded as is now the mode. She wears Spanish male attire, carries her sword tightly belted, and though her head is bent forward, she has the air of a soldier. Her hands only betray her sex. Although fleshy and heavy, their movements are those of a woman's."

This was what the woman looked like after fifteen years' soldiering in the Indies, or in South America, as we now call it. Her length of service is stated in a memorial addressed by her in 1625 to King Philip IV. Her record agrees with and is supported by the sworn statements of four officers and high officials who speak from their personal knowledge of her. Don Luis de Cespedes, some time governor of Paraguay, under date February 2nd, 1625, declares that he had known Catalina de Erauso more than eighteen years back, that she served in Chile in the company of Don Diego Bravo de Sarabia and afterwards in that of Captain Gonzalo Rodriguez. Don Francisco de Navarrete testifies that he met her in Chile when he first landed there in 1608 and that she was already an ensign (*alferez*). No one at that time or, as we shall see, for many years after, had any suspicion that she was not a man. These statements are of vital importance when it

comes to testing this extraordinary woman's account of her origins.

As regards her military career, they agree in the main, though certainly not in the details, with the alleged autobiography published a hundred years ago by Don Joaquin Ferrer from a manuscript which had been found among the papers of an eighteenth-century writer named Trigueros. That Catalina did not write the book may be taken as certain; that it is based on and perhaps largely copied from narratives circulated in her own day and inspired by her is extremely probable. The picture drawn of her is hardly flattering. The sober meritorious soldier who ventures to ask His Majesty for a pension and is backed by grave authorities, ruffles through the pages of Ferrer's book as a cut-throat, a bravo, and a thief. But such a character was all to the taste of the time. The picaresque novel had begun its long voyage. To have presented the heroine as a respectable veteran would have damned the book at the start. Our only course must be to consider each highly spiced story on its merits. Mixed up with the chaff, we shall find a good measure of wheat. But following the Nun Ensign's career, we seem always to be gazing at a film-picture on which a "fade-out" is being continually and exasperatingly superimposed.

The "autobiography" gives the same account of the amazon's parentage and upbringing as is contained not only in the Italian traveller's narration but, also, in a "letter from Cartagena of the Indies to various persons in Seville and Cadiz" which was printed in 1625. "I, Doña Catalina de Erauso," she is made to say, "was born in the town of San Sebastian, in Guipuzcoa, in the year 1585, daughter of Captain Don Miguel de Erauso and Doña Maria Perez de Gallaraga y Arce, natives and residents of the said town.

My parents brought me up at home, with my brothers and sisters, till I was four years old. In 1589, they placed me in the convent of San Sebastian el Antiguo in the same city, which belongs to the Dominican nuns, with my aunt, Doña Ursula de Unza y Sarasti, first cousin of my mother, prioress of that convent, where I was brought up till the age of thirteen ; and then they began to speak of my profession.

“ The year of my noviciate being almost at an end, a quarrel occurred between me and a professed nun, Doña Catalina de Aliri, a widow who had entered religion. She was a powerful woman and I a mere girl. She used her hands on me, which I resented. On the night of March 18th, 1600, the eve of St. Joseph, while the community was at matins, I went into the choir and found my aunt kneeling there. She called me, and handing me the key of her cell told me to fetch her breviary. I went to get it, opened the door, and saw the convent keys hanging on a nail. I left the cell door open and took my aunt her key and breviary. The nuns being in choir and matins solemnly begun, at the first lesson I went up to my aunt and asked leave to retire as I felt unwell. Placing her hand on my head, she said ‘ Go and lie down.’ I left the choir, lit a lamp, went to my aunt’s cell and from it took scissors, some thread and a needle. I took also some dollars which were there and the convent keys, and set about opening and shutting doors, till I came to the last one which gave on the street. Casting from me my scapular, I went out into the highway, without ever having seen it before or knowing which way to turn. At random I went, and finding a plantation of chestnuts close behind the convent, I took cover there, and spent three days planning, fitting, and cutting out clothes. I cut and made myself a pair of breeches out of a blue cloth skirt, and out of

a green linsey petticoat, I made a doublet and gaiters. Not being able to make anything of my habit, I left it behind. My hair I cut off and threw away, and the third night I started off I knew not whither, hurrying along roads and skirting villages, so as to put a distance behind me, and at last I reached Vittoria, which is about twenty leagues from San Sebastian, on foot and weary, and having eaten nothing but the herbs which I found by the wayside."

Circumstantial enough all this. In her memorial, the Ensign also claims Miguel de Erauso for her father and other members of the same family as her kinsfolk. On the strength of this, a chronicler includes her, in the year 1625, in a list of the notabilities of the province of Guipuzcoa, without, however, mentioning her sex. Finally, Ferrer, before publishing the "life," learnt that Catalina's baptismal certificate was still in existence. And sure enough the register of the church of St. Vincent at San Sebastian bears witness that Catalina de Erauso, legitimate daughter of Miguel de Erauso, was christened on February 10th, 1592 !

Startled by the discrepancy in the dates, Ferrer made further and exhaustive enquiries. The books of the convent of San Sebastian el Antiguo had also escaped destruction and certain entries in them proved (firstly) that three sisters of Catalina were professed respectively in 1605, 1606, and 1615 ; (secondly) that Doña Catalina de Aliri, mentioned in the above narrative, was not professed till November, 1605 ; and (thirdly) that a payment of forty ducats was made in January, 1608, by Miguel de Erauso for the maintenance of his daughter, Catalina de Erauso, for the year ending March, 1607—after which date no further entry can be found concerning her. Catalina, aged about fifteen then, was in her convent at San Sebastian, in the spring of 1607, at which

time, or a few months later, it is certified that she was soldiering in Chile, at least half a year's journey from Spain !

Rather wearily, Dr. Fitzmaurice Kelly observes that to reconcile these discrepancies is beyond ordinary ingenuity. It is manifestly impossible, unless we suppose that Catalina's elder sisters conspired with the other nuns to keep the knowledge of her disappearance from their own parents and that the runaway was fighting in South America at the age of fifteen while her name was still borne on the convent books. Who could believe that ? The so-called Nun Ensign stands convicted, as Ferrer saw, of a clever imposture. She had opportunities, as we shall see, for hearing all about Catalina de Erauso and good reasons for assuming her identity. And it was comparatively safe to do so. No explanation is given in the convent records of the disappearance of the girl's name from the books. The probability is that she did leave in scandalous circumstances. And a runaway nun or novice would not be likely in the Spain of Philip IV's day to come forward and challenge another's right to her name.

To me it seems as clear as any fact in history that the woman who fought beside Captain Gonzalo Rodriguez in Chile, who got a pension from her king, and who stalks across our pages in soldier's garb was not the daughter of Miguel de Erauso and Maria de Gallaraga. For that very reason, it is possible to credit a good deal in the generally discredited "autobiography." The real woman, whoever she was, may have been born in the year 1585 and in the Basque provinces. As for the escape from the convent, that may be pure fiction or suggested by the manner of her own flight from home or, not incredibly, another religious house.

According to the narrative, she spent three years in Spain passing under the name of Francisco Loyola, a name which

would readily suggest itself to a countrywoman of the great St. Ignatius. She found employment as a page or a lackey in various cities, notably under Don Juan de Idiaquez, the King's secretary, at Valladolid. Pietro della Valle, it will be remembered, heard that she had been in service about the court. To her adventures and vicissitudes, the "autobiographer" has done his best to lend a picaresque savour. Wherever the disguised girl goes she meets with relatives who don't recognize her; at Valladolid, she throws up her situation because she hears her own father enquiring for her; returning to her native town, she visits her old convent, is smiled at archly as a dashing young cavalier by her old choir-mates, and passes unrecognized by her own mother. She swindles and pilfers and at Bilbao is clapped into gaol for a month for having injured a lad in an affray with stones. Finally, she takes ship from Pasajes—"this was in the spring of 1603"—sails round to Seville, and on Easter Monday ships as a boy on a vessel belonging to the fleet of Don Luis Fajardo, bound for the New World. Here we touch on history. The year was 1605. The error in this case may be due to a copyist.

Being unused to the sea, Catalina (to give her the name she afterwards claimed) had her share of hardships, but by the time she first sighted the northern coast of South America, she had ample time, like the rest of her shipmates, to find her sea-legs. At the attack on and destruction of a Dutch pirate station at the Salinas de Araya near Cumaná, she came under fire for the first time. Meanwhile, in her captain, she had, of course, discovered an uncle or kinsman of some sort. The connexions of the Erauso family must indeed have been numerous and widely distributed. Blood being thicker than water, he developed a fondness for the cabin boy, which she

requited by robbing him of five hundred dollars and deserting at Cartagena.

How in the world, at this point it might be asked, could a girl conceal her sex in the rude intimacy of a ship's forecastle? Only those who have done it can answer. To be sure, in those days there would have been nothing remarkable in a sailor's never once stripping completely throughout the whole of a voyage, and our heroine had contrived to make herself flat-chested. She does not at least pretend to have had such a miraculous escape as our Hannah Snell, who was twice cruelly flogged without her secret being discovered.¹

At any rate, Catalina did reach the golden shores of the Indies, the Mecca of every adventurous spirit in those spacious days. This in itself was no mean achievement. For the Spanish Government, then and throughout its long reign, ran its far-flung empire on very different lines from those adopted by other conquerors. The Americas, it was repeatedly insisted, were held in trust for the natives. It was the duty of the rulers to bring them within the fold of Christ, to civilize them, and meanwhile to shield them from extortion and oppression. In an empire stretching almost from pole to pole and intersected by the most formidable natural barriers, abuses were, of course, almost bound to occur and the natives here and there suffered grievous wrong; but the Viceroys were, for the most part, sagacious, high-minded men who strove to enforce the ideals of the home Government. A sort of feudal system was introduced. Lands were granted to settlers, generally deserving soldiers, on the strict condition that they acted as friends and protectors towards the aborigines. What we should now call exploitation

¹ The editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1750 explains that Hannah, on the first occasion, took care to stand close to the whipping-post, and on the second, to cover her bosom with a handkerchief!

was by no means encouraged ; adventurers came but were not welcomed, and immigrants, like our Catalina, got in only by a backdoor.

Her beginnings in El Dorado, if we credit the autobiography, were commonplace and reputable. At Panama she fell in with a trader, Juan de Urquiza, who took her back with him to Peru. Residing himself at Trujillo, he put her in charge of a store at the small coast town of Saña (since destroyed). "He treated me very well in every respect," says our narrator, "and gave me two suits, one black and the other coloured." The new assistant was also given a list of customers who might be given credit. Among those thus favoured was a handsome lady, named Doña Beatriz de Cardenas, who, it turned out, was the merchant's mistress. So the girl in boy's clothes kept shop peacefully till one unlucky day—a holiday—she was insulted in a public place by one, Reyes, Doña Beatriz's nephew by marriage. The savage-tempered, unsexed Biscayner watched for her opportunity, and slashed the young man across the face, then driving the point of her rapier into his left side. Withdrawing her blade, she promptly took refuge in the neighbouring church. Urquiza coming over from Trujillo to find out what was amiss, learnt that his manager had been dragged out of sanctuary by the alguazils and now languished in the town jail. The bishop, appealed to, was highly incensed by this outrage upon the immunities of the church. After a protracted conflict between the two authorities the youthful bravo was lodged once more in the church, to await the issue of a trial. "You had better marry Doña Beatriz now," proposed the distracted employer. "Reyes is her niece's husband. That will compose the matter." A ticklish situation, assuredly, for Catalina, especially as the lady herself approved the plan. The refugee was

persuaded to leave the sanctuary under cover of the darkness to visit her. "One night, affecting to fear the police, she begged me to stay where I was," continues the narrator, "and locked me in, vowing that I should pleasure her, though the Devil himself said nay. She clasped me so tightly that I had to use force to get away."

Such situations, we are to learn, became familiar to the disguised woman. This time she gave both the lady and the justices the slip, and joined her master at Trujillo. Again Reyes crossed her path; in the affray that ensued she killed one of his supporters, again fled into sanctuary, and this time made good her escape to Lima.

"The City of the Kings," founded by Pizarro seventy years before, was at this time the largest and most important city on the whole continent and the seat of government for the greater part of the Spanish Indies. Catalina enumerates its public buildings, its churches, and innumerable religious houses; yet, according to another contemporary account,¹ it must still have been a mean-looking sort of place. "The plan of the city is traced by long narrow straight streets, cutting each other at right angles. The houses are of adobe, thatched with reeds and a mixture of clay, as it never rains here; but some houses are already made of brick, and they begin to roof them with wood." George Spilbergen, the Dutch admiral, was told by one of his prisoners that the city boasted six hundred priests and a thousand students.² Estimates of the population varied from two thousand Spaniards and twenty-seven thousand Indians to a total of a hundred thousand. "There are seen more women than men, here," adds another traveller.

¹ *Description universal de las Indias.*

² *Purchas, His Pilgrimages.* Bk. II, Chap. VI.

For this reason, perhaps, the new hand from up-country was made much of by the sisters-in-law of the merchant with whom "he" found employment on coming to Lima. "I was lying with my head in one of the girls' laps, tickling her legs," Catalina is made to say, "when we were spotted by my master." A row resulted. The new hand flung out of the place in dudgeon and before nightfall had enlisted, under the high-sounding name of Alonso Ramirez Diaz de Guzman, in one of the six companies then being raised for service in Chile. Her master, we are told, repenting of his severity, came and offered to buy her out. The newly fledged soldier refused. Fighting, one imagines, presented more delights to her than making love to young ladies or rich widows.

Yet the prospect before the recruit was not encouraging. She was destined for service against the Araucanians, that famous American race which had proved and was for ever to prove invincible by arms. If to-day they are citizens of Chile, it is only because they have gradually adopted the language, religion, and habits of the people of European descent. They had killed Valdivia, the discoverer of the country, they had destroyed army after army sent against them. The war was an open wound in the side of Spain. Writing in the year 1604, a chronicler says that the Indians had destroyed six out of thirteen cities in the realm of Chile. They massacred the clergy and carried off the women. "The Indians have grown of such dexterity in the wars that every Indian on horseback with the lance durst sally out on any Spanish soldier were he never so valiant; and every year many go from Peru thither but none return."

Our adventuress was to prove an exception.

Upon the arrival of the reinforcements at Concepcion, continues the narrative, an officer, secretary to the governor,

Alonso de Ribera, came aboard to take the muster-roll. Catalina tells us that on learning her name and place of birth he dropped his pen, embraced her, and began enquiring after his father and mother and sisters, and his little sister, Catalina, the nun. She trips slightly here—her assumed name would have conveyed nothing to the officer, though his interest might have been aroused by her giving San Sebastian as her place of origin. For he was Ensign Miguel de Erauso, brother of the Catalina born in 1592. “I did not know him,” says our Catalina, “for he had not seen me since I was two. I answered his questions as best I could without revealing myself and without his suspecting me. He went on with the muster-roll, and, after he had finished, took me to dinner with him at his quarters and I sat down at his table. He told me that Paicabí, the centre to which I was to go, was a vile hole for soldiers, and that he would ask the Governor to change my garrison.” To this, the Governor, after some demur, assented. “So, when the companies marched away, I stayed behind as my brother’s soldier, eating at his table three years without awakening his suspicions. Sometimes I went with him to his mistress’s house, and sometimes without him. He got wind of this, flew into a temper, and told me to keep away from the place. He spied on me, caught me, belabouring me with his sword-belt as I came out and hurt my head. I was obliged to defend myself, and Captain Aillon who came along succeeded in making peace between us.” But the noise of the affray reached the ears of the Governor, “and after leading a rollicking life, I had to pack off to Paicabí and suffer hardships for three years.”

It is plain, now, how the woman came to hear all about the Erauso family. When on the strength of their common country she struck up a friendship with Miguel, it is unlikely

that she ever dreamed of assuming his sister's identity. But within a year or two of her arrival in Chile, news must have reached Miguel of that sister's disappearance from her convent. It may be supposed that he unburdened his mind to his chum ; and the story sank into her mind, to be recalled by her when she most needed an excuse for her abnormal way of life.

Having thus brought brother and sister together, and made them cross swords, the author of our untrustworthy guide warms to his work and leads us by various devil-may-care adventures and gallant sallies to the tragic climax. After a stabbing business, similar to the affairs in Peru, Catalina takes refuge as usual in a church. While in this uncomfortable lodging, to which she must by now have been well accustomed, she is invited by a brother officer to act as his second in a duel. The encounter takes place at night. Excited by the clash of steel, the seconds join in the combat. Catalina's opponent falls dying to the ground. Opportunely, the moon appears from behind a cloud. Catalina looks on the face of the fallen man. She has slain her own brother !

This particular incident must have been interpolated in the autobiography without her consent. I can hardly imagine any woman caring to go down to history as the slayer of her brother. That Miguel de Erauso was dead before she told her story we may be sure. And it is quite likely that he met his death in the way described, at another soldier's hand.

As she escaped the disastrous rout of the Spanish forces by the Araucanian chief, Cuenecura,¹ in 1607, we may conclude that she was detained, willingly or unwillingly, at

¹ The author of the " autobiography " never mentions the name of this chief, nor the rout of 1607, which would assuredly have been engraved on the memory of every soldier that had served on that front.

Concepcion. But we get a better account of "Alonso Diaz de Guzman" in the certificates printed at the end of Ferrer's book. There she is described as a useful well-disciplined soldier. When Navarrete met her in garrison at Arauco in 1608, she had already been posted as Ensign to the company of Captain Gonzalo Rodriguez. So well did she acquit herself in the fighting on that dubious frontier that she was picked by the Governor to accompany Colonel Alvaro Nuñez de Pineda to hold the advanced post of Paicabí, farther south—"a vile hole for soldiers," no doubt, but not the place of dishonourable banishment we were asked just now to suppose.

The warlike Araucanians gave little rest to the handful of Spaniards marooned at that bleak lonely spot. In 1609, the Governor with two thousand troops attacked the terrible Cuenecura, but after a hard-fought battle retired. This may be the action referred to in the biography as the Battle of Puren, in which Ensign Guzman was badly wounded. We are also told that she took prisoner a rich and powerful chief and hanged him incontinently on the nearest tree; for which abuse of the laws of war she was refused the command of the company, vacated by the death of her captain, and was put on half-pay. It may be true—a military delinquency of this sort would certainly not have been mentioned in after years by officers asked to certify to the services of an old and tried lieutenant. Eventually, having put in thirteen years¹ serving His Catholic Majesty on the Chilian front, she applied for and was granted leave by the Governor to retire to Peru.

This cannot have been a month earlier than 1618. For the next two years of the woman's span, we have no other

¹ According to Don Luis de Cespedes; fourteen years according to Monrroy.

source of information than the "Life." By now, the Ensign was a battle-scarred veteran somewhere about thirty. Cut off for reasons we can only guess at from her real kin, she knew no family but the regiment, no home but the camp or barracks. What should she do now? It was natural she should proceed to the region we now call Bolivia, where every mountain was reported to be lined with silver and every stream washed over sands of gold. "At Potosi," a Spanish captive told Spilbergen, "live fifteen hundred shifting card-players and nimming companions which live by their wits." It was the company which suited the war-worn soldier best.

She crossed from Chile into Tucuman, the name then given to the country at present styled the Argentine Republic. The transcriber describes her passage across the mighty Andes, which at any point must indeed have been an arduous undertaking. Her two companions perish of cold and hunger above the snow-line after their last mule has been shot and devoured. The rugged amazon sheds tears "for the only time in her life." She calls on the Virgin and St. Joseph, staggers on, and presently feels a warmer wind fanning her face. She has crossed the watershed between the oceans; her path is now downwards towards the friendly plains. She is befriended by some Indians and conducted to a farm. The owner, a half-breed widow, takes a fancy to the Spaniard and proposes that "he" shall marry her daughter, a girl as ugly as sin. "He" pretends to fall in with this plan, enjoys the widow's hospitality for three months, and then, having procured a new outfit from her, decamps. The half-breed is not the only victim. A well-born girl, the niece of the canon of Tucuman, is also left lamenting the gallant whom she has loaded with presents.

Episodes of this sort fairly teem in the pages published by Ferrer. Certainly there is nothing improbable about them. The tall soldier from over the mountains must have made a strong appeal to women's imagination in that lonely country; and though, according to Pietro della Valle, the Ensign preferred male to feminine society, she must have been compelled, quite early in the day, to assume that air of gallantry deemed natural to the soldier. Cozening love-sick women, such an impostor would regard as a good joke and a just revenge for the boredom to which they subjected her; though Catalina was sufficiently epicene, perhaps, to appreciate their charms to the extent one appreciates a cat's. Men she regarded as comrades; foes, strangers. She never had a lover.

We are shown her at Potosi, at Chuquisaca, at Cochabamba, all over Upper Peru, gambling, brawling, cheating. Many of the incidents recorded have a curious ring of truth about them, but one remembers Defoe and is warned that the picaresque romancer had a remarkable gift for the circumstantial. And again we find flaws in the narration. When the pugnacious Ensign is put to the torture, she is not, it would appear, stripped; and when for her (alleged) tenth or twelfth stabbing job, she is led to the scaffold and the noose actually looped round her neck, one wonders why she does not make a general confession and proclaim her sex, as we know she did on a later occasion. Hoping that we shall swallow all this, the chronicler does not scruple to tell us that immediately after her reprieve, the desperado was allowed to preside over a court-martial and straightway sent out somebody else to be hanged.

The rest of the stuff is hardly worth repeating—the romancer has got hold of two or three stock situations, which

are presented again and again with only slight variations. But here and there we strike against something which looks like fact. The heroine takes part in suppressing an outbreak at Potosi ; she looks after a herd of llamas belonging to a wealthy *ranchero* ; she returns from an expedition against the savage tribes of the north-east, in which her commander is killed, with her breeches full of gold, which she squanders at the gaming tables. These activities are also mentioned in " the letter from Cartagena " and may well have filled up the greater part of two years, diversified, I see no reason to doubt, by occasional acts of lawlessness and collisions with authority.

A few escapades of that kind would not be likely to tell against an old soldier in the eyes of a colonial commander.¹ In the year 1620, we are told by Don Juan Recio de Leon, an officer charged with exploring and settling the eastern frontiers of Peru, he was approached at his headquarters at Copacabana, on Lake Titicaca, by Ensign Diaz de Guzman, whom he had known in Chile as " a most valiant and honourable soldier." The adventuress evidently had not made her fortune at the silver mines or " struck it rich," in the language of the prospector. She was taken on Leon's staff, and employed by him in recruiting settlers and in managing convoys of food, munitions, and other supplies, which duties she performed to his entire satisfaction. Finally, he despatched her, as a specially trustworthy officer, to Huan-cavelica, with orders to Captain Velez de Guevara to join him with his company. She had orders to call at Cuzco on the way. These missions the Ensign faithfully carried out. Then came news which must have considerably astonished

¹ Probably, too, the subject of this memoir changed her name more than once during this period.

Recio de Leon and his orderly room. Ensign Diaz de Guzman, lingering at Guamanga (now called Ayacucho), had been discovered to be a woman.

II

How this came about, accounts differ. In her own memorial, Catalina declares it was the result of an incident "which need not be related here." Monrroy in his deposition refers to mortal wounds which she had received. The wounds, she told Pietro della Valle, had been received in a quarrel. This agrees with the "autobiography" which represents her as pursued by the police, and continues: "Finding myself cornered, I fired my pistol and knocked one of them over. My position grew worse, and my Biscayan friend, with others from the same part of the country, ranged themselves beside me." (At all times, it seems, Catalina could rely on the help of her countrypeople wherever she found them). "The Corregidor shouted to his men to kill me--fire-arms were used on both sides. Escorted by four torch-bearers, the Bishop came out of his house and penetrated to the midst of the throng, his secretary leading him to me. On reaching me, he said, 'Ensign, give me your arms.' I replied, 'My lord, I am beset with enemies.' He repeated 'Give me your arms. You will be safe with me, and I pledge you my word to deliver you, whatever it may cost me.' I answered, 'Most generous lord, once we reach the cathedral, I will kiss your lordship's feet.' At this moment one of the Corregidor's people laid hold of me, hustling me and dragging me roughly, without respect for his lordship's presence, so that to defend myself I had to use my hands and down one of them. Armed with buckler and rapier, the Bishop's secretary and others of

his household, hurried up, protesting against the insult offered to his lordship. The tumult then subsided. His lordship took me by the arm, took my weapons from me, and placing me beside him, led me into his house. He directed that the slight wound I had should be dressed, that I should be given supper and a bed, and that I should be kept under lock and key. Soon after the Corregidor arrived and went into the matter at length with his lordship as I learned later on."

It was a rude hour, we see, for the Woman Ensign. The police had made up their mind to have her. She had uncomfortable recollections of other charges hanging over her, which might be revived. It might be that she had played off the spiritual against the civil authority once too often. If the good Bishop failed to protect her against the arm of the law, it might be the garotte or the galleys. And the woman, I suspect, was weary by this time of her vagabond existence, without any prospect of a home or refuge for her old age. But to disclose her sex merely would help her little. Man or woman, the law would hold her to account and insist upon the church's handing her over. Then, if not before, the story of Erauso's sister, the novice Catalina, would recur to her. A fugitive nun was the church's captive. Better to trust to the spiritual than the temporal arm ! In such manner and for such motives, I suggest, was the woman's imposture conceived.

The story goes on : " Next morning, about ten, the Bishop had me brought into his presence, and asked me who I was, where I came from, who my parents were, and all about my life, how I came there, weaving into his questions good advice, dwelling on the perils of this life and the terrors of the other life for the sinner cut off without warning—exhorting

me to be peaceable and to humble myself before God. And seeing that he was a saintly man and feeling as though I was in the presence of God, I revealed myself to him and said, 'My lord, all that I have told you is false. The truth is, I am a woman. I was born in such-and-such a place, my parents were so-and-so; I was placed in a certain convent, became a novice, was about to be professed, and for certain reasons I ran away. I dressed up and cut my hair, roamed hither and thither, slew, wounded, and robbed, and now I throw myself at the feet of your most illustrious lordship.'

"While my story was being told—that is till one o'clock [*sic*—the saintly Bishop sat in amazement, listening to me without blinking an eyelid or saying a word; and when I had finished, he sat still silent, shedding tears. He rang a bell, summoned his chaplain, and sent me to his oratory. There they placed a table and a mattress for me and locked me in, and I lay down and slept. In the afternoon, the Bishop sent for me again and spoke to me with great kindness, telling me to give thanks to God for having opened my eyes to the dangers which would have led me into eternal torment. He exhorted me to review my past life and to make a good confession, which I had made in great part already and which would now be easy to me. I retired, had a good supper, and went to bed.

"Next morning the Lord Bishop celebrated Mass, at which I assisted. He went to breakfast and took me with him. He thought my case the most extraordinary he had ever heard, and concluded by asking 'But is it a fact?' I said, 'My lord, I have told you the truth, and if a jury of matrons would set your mind at rest, here I am.' He answered 'I agree to that and am glad you suggested it.' In the afternoon, about four, came two matrons, who had a look

at me and were satisfied, and afterwards declared on oath that they had examined me and found me a maid entire as I was born. His lordship was moved, dismissed these midwives, sent for me, and in presence of his chaplain embraced me saying, 'My daughter, I believe all that you have told me, and shall believe henceforth whatever you say. I respect you as one of the most remarkable people of this world and promise to help you as far as I can for your soul's and body's good.' He had me placed in a decent room, where I stayed in comfort, preparing for my confession, which I made as well as I could; after which his lordship gave me the Sacrament. It seems my case had been bruited abroad, and a great crowd gathered, it being impossible to keep out the great personages, to his lordship's annoyance and mine."

It was Catalina's "purity" which had saved her. In the eyes of the Bishop that atoned for all the blood she had shed in brawls, for all the thefts she may have confessed to or committed. Elsewhere, we read that she was called on to declare that she was innocent of carnal sin. Had she at any time indulged the lusts of the flesh, which assuredly she never experienced, I doubt whether the Church would have thrown over her the mantle of its protection. As it was, the civil authorities were told to go about their business. The creature was the Church's prisoner. It remained to ascertain whether she had or had not been professed, whether any vows had been broken. And the civil authority acquiesced, recognizing that here was a prodigy. The captains, her old comrades, no doubt roared with laughter when they heard of it. Catalina must have been the staple for half the barrack yarns circulating from Vera Cruz to Valparaiso the next twenty years. But to the people at large, the Nun Ensign, as she was promptly styled, at once became a heroine and a

marvel. Her fame, Pietro della Valle tells us, reached him even in Asia.

Meantime, she languished in the cloister. Very solemnly, she was conducted by the Bishop through the admiring throng to the convent of the Poor Clares, the only nunnery in Ayacucho. The nuns came out, bearing tapers, to meet the prodigal daughter. How awkwardly the tall bronzed soldier must have walked in the long petticoats she had not worn these eighteen years past ! We can imagine with what grimaces she must have submitted to the kiss of welcome offered by the sisters. They must have found her a strange guest. One would gladly forego all the tales about her swash-buckling for a truthful account of her early months in the convent. Her round oaths, her rough gestures, must have made the Prioress rejoice when orders came from the Archbishop that she should be transferred to Lima. Thither she journeyed in a litter, escorted by six priests, four nuns, and six armed men. Carried in a litter !—she who had crossed the Andes on mule back and conducted convoys through the uncharted wilds of Upper Peru. I can fancy her at each stopping place stealing away from the priests and the nuns, for a drink and a gossip with the armed men. Tragedies were afterwards written about the nun who became a soldier—it is odd that no one thought of writing a farce about the soldier who was forced to be a nun.

At the capital, the multitude swarmed round the litter to see the queer fish which Mother Church had netted. Catalina dined with the Archbishop, and with the Viceroy whose company she must have relished better. Then she was offered her choice of the nunneries in the city as a residence, or rather as a prison. She stayed a few days in each and selected the convent of the Holy Trinity. She must have

been quite broken to the life when news came, after two and a half years, from San Sebastian that the novice Catalina de Erauso had never taken the final vows.

The impostor, no doubt, breathed a deep sigh of relief. It would have gone hard with her had she been originally misinformed on this point. She now demanded, by what right is not clear, to be sent back to Spain. At Bogotá, we hear, the Bishop of the city urged her to enter religion. She refused, pleading she had no vocation. She embarked at Cartagena and reached Cadiz on November 1st, 1624.

By this time she had resumed male attire and was greeted with cheers whenever she was recognized. At Madrid she stayed twenty days, and was thrown into prison, she knew not why, to be released by order of the Prime Minister Olivares. Davila, the historian, talked with her. She seems to have bragged a great deal about her exploits, magnifying them, as old soldiers (and the rest of us, for that matter) are wont to do. One of the numerous Erauso family, as she herself mentions in her memorial, had taken part in the sea-fight with Spilbergen's fleet off Lima in 1615—she appropriated the experience to herself, though she had been miles away, in Chile, in that year.¹ Most of the yarns which found their way into the "autobiography" were probably invented by her about now, to enhance her prodigiousness with the people of the old country. She was made the subject of a play by Montalban; her portrait was painted by Pacheco. Meantime, she was busy preparing her petition to the King for a pension and getting it backed by the ex-viceeroys and governors who happened to be in Madrid. In the end she was allotted a pension of eight hundred crowns.

While this matter was pending, she did not take the trouble

¹ It is odd that Ferrer did not notice this slip.



CATALINA DE ERAUSO

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to visit the town she claimed as her birthplace and the nuns she called her sisters. Yet so popular a heroine, blessed by bishops and reconciled with Holy Church, even if she had run away from her convent, might surely have counted on a welcome, nay, on a triumphal reception by her kinsfolk and townsmen. The elder Erausos were dead, but the daughters would like to talk with their long-lost sister and to hear about the soldier brothers who had died in the New World. But the adventuress knew better than to set foot in San Sebastian and to match her wits against the memories of those who had known the real Catalina de Erauso. Her abstention, to my mind as to Ferrer's, clinches the theory of her imposture.

No ; instead of visiting the Basque Province, she started on a pilgrimage to Rome, moved a little by piety, and more by a natural desire to show herself to a wondering world. Travel, she soon found, was more perilous in the Old World than in the New. At La Tour de Pin in Dauphiné, close to the frontier of Savoy, the pilgrims fell in with a squad of French horse, who conceived suspicions of them and, as Catalina alleged, followed them on to Piedmontese territory. The veteran of the Indian wars was the last person to brook interference. She gave plenty of excuse, I warrant, for the rough treatment to which she was subjected. They told her that the King of Spain was no good, accused her of being a Lutheran spy, and finally dragged her back to La Tour. There she was kept in a dungeon for a fortnight, when, having taken all her papers and effects, including two hundred doubloons from her, they flung her out with her back towards Italy. Foaming with rage, she retraced her steps towards the Pyrenees. At Pau, she was succoured by the Comte de Gramont. On her own side of the frontier, she made her complaint before a notary at Pamplona, and besought the Court

of Madrid to obtain her redress for the injuries she had suffered. The incident does not seem to have been pursued through diplomatic channels, but it was one of the grounds on which her prayer for a pension was granted. In her deposition, it is notable that she describes herself as the Ensign Antonio de Erauso—no mention is made of her sex, which does not seem to have been detected by her assailants.

That she was not discouraged by this sorry experience and reached Rome at last, we know. It is stated that the Pope received her in audience, gave her plenary absolution for all her sins, and, which she possibly valued more, permission to wear man's dress for the rest of her life. It is news to me, at least, that this prerogative is claimed by the Holy See. A nine days' wonder, the Nun Ensign sat for her picture to Crescencio ; but the portrait cannot be found.

The autobiography leaves the adventuress at Naples with a pretty quarrel in immediate prospect. For the next four years we lose all trace of her. Like so many old soldiers, before and since, she found that her country had little use for her. How she lived during this time it is fruitless to speculate. Perhaps on her pension, supplemented by the proceeds of the plays and stories written about her. Money she must have got from somewhere, for it was with a definite business enterprise in prospect that she sought and obtained leave to return to America. On July 21st, 1630, she sailed from Seville, this time for Habana, with the fleet of Don Miguel de Echazarreta, in whose ship, we are told, she had first sailed for the Indies as a cabin boy five-and-twenty years before.

From Cuba, she proceeded to Mexico. She kept the name of Antonio de Erauso, and set up as a carrier or conductor between Vera Cruz and the capital, doing very well and

amassing property in the shape of money, black slaves, and mules. She was middle-aged now; her isolation from the rest of mankind must, one thinks, at times have troubled her. All consciousness of her sex had long since faded out; it was late, much too late, to think of turning woman again and trying for a husband. It is not strange or unnatural, therefore, that she should have hankered after the affection or companionship of one of her own sex. The story¹ goes that at Jalapa there was a young lady awaiting an escort to the capital, where she was to take the veil. The mayor, who seems to have been responsible for her custody, was told that "Don Antonio de Erauso" would be an eminently suitable conductor, since "he" was, in reality, an elderly woman. Having satisfied himself of this by taking a peep at Catalina while she was in her bath, his worship committed the girl to her charge. One pictures the stern-faced veteran riding beside the maiden, as the cavalcade wound its way along the flanks of the mighty volcanoes, holding her rein as they skirted the ravines. They talked, no doubt, of the religious life, of which the Ensign had certainly had experience in Peru, at least. All the while, we can fancy the queer unsexed creature marvelling at the delicacy and sweetness of the girl and thinking what a companion she would make for her declining years.

At a place called El Chilar, an inquisitive alcade barred the way. Who was the señorita, he demanded, and where was the muleteer taking her? "She is my wife," promptly replied the tall Biscayner. The magistrate appeared not to be convinced; but when, upon a further demand that the lady should unmask, he found himself looking down the barrel of an arquebus, he rode away.

¹ *Ultima y Tercera Relacion de la Vida de la Monja Alferez.* Mexico, 1653.

Had not the Mexican girl known her knight to be a woman, this display of mettle might have touched her heart. As it was, upon her arrival at the city, the sly wench discovered her affection, not for the religious state, but for a caballero, who sought her in marriage. No difficulty was made by her family—the veil of the novice was exchanged for the bridal wreath. The young lady's astonishment may be imagined when, at this happy conjuncture, she received a visit from her late duenna, who, frantic with jealousy and disappointment, offered to pay her dowry and to settle half her pension upon her for life if she would break off the match and enter a convent as she had originally designed! The proposal reveals Catalina's pathetic ignorance of normal human nature. It need not be said that the girl preferred her lover, to whom she got married. They settled in Mexico City. The Ensign could not get her out of her mind, and glad for once, it may be supposed, of the fact of her sex, pestered the young wife with her company whenever she happened to be in the capital. But even this consolation was denied to her. The lady wearied of this person who might be a woman but who had all the appearance and the manner of a rough muleteer. Catalina was told by the husband not to call again. In a fury she sat down and wrote to him. To a person of her quality, she said, such a prohibition was a mortal insult, especially as she had never transgressed the laws of courtesy. "Now," she continued, "I am informed that you threaten to kill me if ever I pass down your street, and although I am a woman, this is a thing insufferable to my valour. In order, therefore, that you may prove my prowess and achieve your boast, I shall await you behind the church of San Diego between the hours of one and six." This letter is signed "Doña Chatherina de Erauzu." The combat did not take

place. The quarrel was adjusted, some say, through the good offices of friends ; others have it that the Don refused to cross swords with a woman. Such a refusal would have goaded the Nun Ensign to fury. We hear, however, that seeing her enemy attacked in a public place by miscreants, she rushed to his assistance, delivered him, and thus won his respect for a woman's blade.

A last glimpse of Catalina is afforded us by the recollections of Fray Nicolas de la Renteria, a Capuchin, who saw her at Vera Cruz in the year 1645. She seemed then to be about fifty years of age ; was of robust build, but not fleshy, of dark complexion ; a few hairs served her for a moustache. A not improbable legend has it that she had turned devout. She heard Mass every day, recited the Office, like a professed nun, and fasted often. Perhaps it was on this account that when she died of fever, in the year 1650, she was laid to rest in the church of San Juan de Dios at Orizaba with ceremonies befitting a pious ecclesiastic.

Her remains were afterwards translated to the principal church, but their final resting-place cannot now be identified. Nor, at this late date, are we ever likely to ascertain the real identity of the Nun Ensign. If not Catalina de Erauso, who was she ? Ferrer hazards it that she may have been a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, branded early in youth with the mark of Cain ; never daring, therefore, to disclose her real name and antecedents. I see no reason to suppose this. Her motives for assuming the personality of the runaway novice have already been guessed at ; once she had taken on the disguise, she would have found it difficult if not dangerous to discard it altogether, though she did in fact take on a male Christian name.

Like our Christian Davis and possibly many other women

unknown to fame, she probably drifted into a masculine mode of life under the spur of necessity.¹ It was hard for a woman to earn a living in those days, outside marriage or the cloister. But because she was unsuited to neither of those states, it need not be concluded that she was a physiological freak or physically abnormal, as a recent writer, Dr. Nicolás León, is anxious to prove.² Enormous numbers of women in every land are born, in the jargon of the sex-physiologist, "temperamentally frigid." Our adventuress was certainly one of these, and her sexual apathy, as the years went by, would have been fostered by a life of hardship and peril. She might, notwithstanding, have been thawed by the ardour of a man's passion; but what man was there to love this tall, harsh-visaged, evil-tempered bravo? As a woman, she would hardly have been a success; as a man, she has earned for herself a minor niche in the gallery of her country's heroes.

¹ Her case may be paralleled by that recently reported from Chicago, of a young man who found himself obliged permanently to assume the disguise of a girl in order to find employment as a typist.

² In his interesting tract, *La Monja Alferez : cuál seria su verdadero sexo?* (Anales del Museo Nacional), Mexico, for a copy of which I am indebted to the courtesy of Don Genaro Estrada of the Mexican Foreign Office.

“ THE GERMAN PRINCESS ”

(MARY CARLETON.)

“ **S**HE was so famous that so great a novelty has not been seen in the age in which she lived nor in any other age, as I can read of; I never heard her parallel in everything; and I believe, had she been exposed to public view for profit, she might have raised five hundred pounds of them that would have given sixpence or a shilling apiece to see her; it was the only talk for all the places of public resort in and near London.”

In these terms, which might have been used to describe a Two-Headed Songstress or a Bearded Giantess, a seventeenth-century journalist introduces Mary Carleton, one of the earliest woman-crooks of whom there is any reliable record. The woman offender was, of course, no new thing. In Charles II's day you could see women “turned off” any Monday at Tyburn or at any assize town; Evelyn records, without any expression of horror, that passing one day through Smithfield, he saw “a miserable creature, burning who had murdered her husband”; at the Bridewell courtesans were “curiously whipt” every week. It is plain, therefore, that Mary must have exhibited some unusual quality, have been something novel in the way of rogues, to merit such comment. She certainly appealed to her contemporaries' sense of humour. Her “autobiographies” and “memoires” poured out of the press. Quite a literature still exists about her. An American writer sees in these

quaintly printed little books the beginnings of the English novel, developed by Defoe. But there is more fact than fiction in the accounts of the first part of her career, as may be proved by comparing them with each other and with the records of her trial.

Early in the morning of March 31st (old style), 1663, Mr. King, the licensee of the Exchange tavern in Poultry, was testing brass farthings against his counter, not, let us hope, with the intention of restoring the bad ones to general circulation. Two customers came in. One had the air of a parson or a minister; the other was a young, well-built woman, dressed in a black velvet waistcoat, rather the worse for wear, a black silk petticoat, and a hood, which was drawn well over her face. They had just landed, they explained, at Billingsgate, from the Gravesend tilt-boat. (This was a sailing barge, an unfashionable means of transport, corresponding to the stage-waggon on land.) Madam was very tired with the night's journey. Perhaps Mr. King would let her rest awhile, while the gentleman went in search of a lodging. The vintner, his curiosity already roused, was all compliance. He showed the lady into an inner room, where his wife would presently attend her. Thereupon the clerical gentleman took leave tenderly of the lady, promising to return shortly.

As soon as his back was turned, the young woman made a grimace and entreated King to deny him when he came back. The parson, she said, was no friend of hers, but had scraped acquaintance with her on the boat and had ended by offending her with his familiarities. Mrs. King, who came of more genteel stock than her husband, was at once favourably impressed by the stranger's nice sense of the proprieties. She began to draw her out and was rewarded with no common tale.

Speaking broken English, the lady in black said that she had just come by way of Holland from Cologne, of which city she was a native. She was of gentle, even noble birth, her father having been Henry van Wolway, licentiate at law, and lord of Holnstein. Left, alas ! an orphan at an early age, she had been educated by the Poor Clares. (Of the religious life and the interior of convents she then and afterwards displayed an intimate knowledge.) English she had been taught by a Miss Margaret Hammond, the daughter, she understood, of a baronet in the north of England. Sought in marriage by a hideous old "soldado" of the Thirty Years' War and by an equally odious and pallid student of alchemy, she had resolved to take refuge in England—England, because she had been charmed by the courtesy and knightliness of the gentlemen about the Court of His Majesty King Charles II when he was lately in exile at Cologne. Prince Rupert's name was casually mentioned as that of an old acquaintance. Arrived in London, she must now find a suitable lodging till fresh funds arrived from her factor in Germany. She would straightway write a letter to that person and would ask Mr. King to take it to the post office. (There was a postal service to the Continent in King Charles's day, but no arrangements, I suspect, for returning dead letters.)

The above, comparing various versions, seems to be substantially the account Mary gave of herself. There was nothing exaggerated or impossible about it. She did not then or at any other time represent herself as a princess. The tavern-keeper noted the high-flown address on the letter, and talked her over with his wife. Presently they told her she might go farther and fare worse. A decent chamber was at her disposal in the Exchange tavern, and there, it was hoped, her ladyship would feel herself among friends.

Her ladyship gratefully accepted. The parson, who called next day, was sent away with a flea in his ear, and disappears from this history. Afterwards he no doubt congratulated himself on his good luck. Though reserved, even taciturn of habit, as Germans in those days were expected to be, the lady let Mrs. King know that her estate was worth fifteen hundred pounds a year. She displayed jewels, too, which looked like a lot of money. The Kings became curiously interested in their foreign lodger.

At this point the stories begin to differ sharply. You may believe, if you like, that the City tavern-keeper and his relatives were simple, guileless souls, deliberately marked down by the experienced adventuress. It is much more likely that Mary aimed at nothing more than getting a few days' free board and lodging, and that, as is so often the case in this kind of swindle, the victims were led into the trap by their own cupidity. It would be a thousand pities, we can imagine the Kings saying to each other, if this poor foreign young gentlewoman should fall into the hands of some needy adventurer or fortune-hunter—like the parson who had pestered her. Just about this time Mrs. King's younger brother, John Carleton, dropped into the tavern for a friendly glass. A nice gentlemanly young fellow was John, who was just then eating his dinners at the Middle Temple. He was not over remarkable, his people thought, for wit or worldly wisdom. A rich wife, his sister reflected, would be just the thing for him. So she presented him to the high-born young German lady in the cosy parlour behind the bar.

How the courtship began we shall never know with certainty. John declares that Mary made eyes at him from the first, that she embarrassed him by her attentions, that she vowed she had fallen in love with him, and in short, made

such overtures as no man could resist. She says, "To the addresses of Mr. John Carleton, I carried myself with so much indifference, not superciliously refusing his visits, or readily admitting his suit, not disheartening him with a severe retiredness or challenging of his imparity, nor encouraging him with a freedom or openness of heart, or arrogant of my own condition, that he and his friends were upon the spur to consummate the match, which yet I delayed and dissembled with convenient pretences." She was kept practically a prisoner by the Kings, she alleges. They would not suffer her to speak to anyone else, and paid a man named Sackville a large sum of money to keep her presence in the tavern a secret. John was beside himself to marry her, "like a howling Irishman." He admits that he showed her many courtesies, taking her for drives to Holloway and Islington. He presented her to his parents who lived in Greyfriars, off Newgate Street. Mrs. Carleton evinced a lively interest in the sources of her fortune, and was far from agreeing with her expressed view that love was a sufficient capital to marry upon.

The wooing, at all events, was brief. Within a fortnight of Mary's appearance at the Exchange tavern the pair were married at St. Bartholomew's, on Easter Sunday, 1663, without licence. A two days' honeymoon was spent at Barnet, and then, to make things doubly sure, they were married over again with a licence.

Old Carleton, the father, "that learned, judicious, ancient gentleman," was taken in as easily as the rest of the family. He came down handsomely enough, setting the couple up in a smart lodging in Durham Yard (where the Adelphi now stands), and making his new daughter-in-law liberal advances on the strength of moneys she expected from Germany. A coach even was provided, in which the new Mrs. Carleton

took the air in Hyde Park. It is likely enough that it was Carleton senior who at this moment began to tell people his son had married a German princess. They began to look more closely at the "Dutch-built" "high-breasted" young woman. One man, an acquaintance of the Carletons, fancying he recognized her, or for some other reason suspicious of her, wrote to a friend at Dover. Meanwhile, Mary spent her husband's money very freely, and the Carletons began to wonder when they would get a return for their outlay.

The comedy had lasted only two weeks when the reply from Dover was communicated to the father. "By what I can discover it is a gentlewoman that is the greatest cheat in the world. She has now two husbands living in this town, the one a shoemaker named Thomas Stedman, the other a chirurgeon named Thomas Day. She was born in Canterbury, her name is Mary Modders, her father was a musician belonging to Christchurch, Canterbury. She was lately in Dover Castle, a prisoner taken from a ship bound for the Barbadoes, when she cheated the master of fifty pounds. If it be she, I am sorry for your friend's misfortune. If I shall refer you to Mr. John Williams his wife, who liveth near St. Saviour's Dock, New Stairs, near Redriff, she is the master's wife of the Barbadoes ship; and if you can prevail with her to go to see her, she will give you full satisfaction whether it be she or no. I pray you send me a line of the appearance of the business, and the man's name that is married to her, and his calling; for it is reported that a minister took her up at Gravesend. My respects to yourself and father."

The dismay of the Carletons is easily imagined. There is no chagrin equal to that of the cozener who finds himself cozened. Mrs. Williams was sent for and arrived at Greyfriars

while John and Mary were in the house. Upon seeing her, Mary pulled her hood about her face and refused to look at her. "You know me, madam," screamed the skipper's wife. "You are the wretch who cheated my husband and many beside." "I do not *kun-now* you" sullenly repeated Mary, with what she took to be a German accent, and besought her husband to take her home. John complied, having promised his frantic parents not to let her out of his sight. Presently they were followed to Durham Yard by a shoemaker, introduced by Mrs. Williams, who also professed to recognize Mary and rated her in vile language for a baggage and an impostor. On the top of these disclosures, Mr. King hurried over from the City, to announce that the jewels which he had accepted as security were false, every one.

In his whining, pitiable *Ultimum Vale*, John implores pity for himself, while graphically describing the terror and despair of the poor trapped adventuress. She dressed herself in her prettiest—"an Indian gown"—and sat up all night on the edge of the bed, protesting her love for her husband and entreating him to let her go. Bigamy, it should be remembered, was a hanging matter in those days. She even brandished a knife and threatened to kill herself. But make any admissions against herself she would not. But the miserable John was sufficiently strong to keep her a prisoner, ready and eager to hand over to the hangman the woman in whose arms he had slept a fortnight long. Next morning, the lodging in Durham Yard was invaded by the whole Carleton family. "They plucked off all my clothes," says Mary, "even my bodice and a pair of silk stockings being also pulled off me." Old Carleton swore that he would have the law of her. At the last moment, it appears, John had sufficient human feeling to ask that she might not be sent to

Newgate. They dragged her, therefore, before a Westminster justice, Mr. Godfrey, by whom she was committed to the Westminster Gatehouse (a place much preferred by malefactors to Newgate), and Carleton entered into recognizances to prosecute.

It says much for the journalism of those days that by this time the whole business had become the talk of the town. The "German gentlewoman" had already been magnified into the "German Princess" whom, Pepys tells us, his friends went to have a look at as she sat in the Gatehouse. Prisoners were then exhibited to satisfy public curiosity. While public opinion inclined towards her on account of her brave carriage and adroitness, the Carletons exerted themselves to bring her to the gallows. They could not hope to get their money back by securing a conviction; a criminal trial in open court was, I suppose, the only means they knew of dissolving John's marriage and setting him free of the woman.

Perhaps John himself secretly shrank from hanging her. For a sucking counsel, he prepared his case singularly ill. The trial, which took place at the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice Howel on June 7th, 1663, illustrates, moreover, the difficulties placed in the way of justice by the difficulty of communication and travel. Only one material witness was produced by the prosecution, a man named Knot, who swore he had seen the accused marry a shoemaker, named Stedman, at Canterbury, nine years before; Stedman he had seen alive at Dover only a week ago; the marriage, so far as he knew, was not registered—things were done differently under the late usurpation; the accused's maiden name was Mary Modders; he believed, also, that she had been tried and acquitted for intermarrying with another man called Day.

The judge listened doubtfully. “But,” he asked, “in the whole city of Canterbury is there none who for love of truth and justice will come here to bear out what you say?” Apparently there was not. Young Carleton afterwards averred in print that Mary had written to the governor of Dover Castle, threatening to haunt him if she were hanged, and that in consequence he had clapped Stedman into prison lest he should give evidence.

Called on for her defence, Mary gave Knot the lie. She had never been in Canterbury or heard the name Modders. Her confident bearing, it is said, very much impressed the jury. A fact which told much in her favour was that a man called by the Carletons to identify her while she lay in prison had identified another woman instead. The judge, summing up, reminded the jury that no one must be convicted merely on hearsay evidence; that Knot’s evidence lacked corroboration; finally, that this was a capital offence, and that since a woman was not entitled to benefit of clergy, if convicted, she must hang. After a short consultation the jury found her not guilty, a verdict received with mingled hissing and applause

Applause, I think, predominated. Pepys, under date June 7th, writes, “My lady Batten inveighed mightily against the ‘German Princess,’ and I as high in defence of her wit and spirit and glad that she is cleared at the Sessions.”

Mary, upon her acquittal, asked the judge, “What shall I do for my clothes taken from me?” “We ought not to look after you,” replied his lordship. “You have now a husband to do it.” But John refused to accept the court’s finding and was deaf to Mary’s pleadings. He would not take her back. When she called at his parents’ house to demand her silk stockings, etc., she was denied satisfaction

and driven away. She was forced to seek a lodging in Fuller's Rents.

The "German Princess" had become the sensation of the hour. She was first-rate copy, and the journalists flocked round her. Their case having been disposed of in court, husband and wife rushed into print. Mary put her name to two pamphlets, telling her pathetic story—liberally embellished by the scribe—and representing her husband as the unwilling instrument of his parents' spite and rapacity. John, far from being touched by her forgiving attitude and protestations of love, replied. In his last tract, called the *Ultimum Vale*, he assails her with Rabelaisian vigour as an "outlandish Canterbury monster," "a she-creature like a Spanish jennet got by the wind—a German soul translated into the body of a Canterbury fiddler's daughter—a German fiddlestick played upon a Canterbury fiddle—this two-legged monster, this pretended German lady," etc.

London rocked with laughter at these explosions of venom which goaded Mary's press-agent into a longer and much more embittered defence. Young Carleton, having so badly conducted his own case, wisely gave up the law, and took a coffee-house, to which it may be presumed a good many people went to hear the story of his wrongs from the laughing-stock of London. Mary was advised to do the same but considered that it was unfitting her condition to keep a coffee-house. So she went on the stage and, like Lola Montez, two hundred years later, acted herself in a play written about her own adventures. Under date April 15th, 1664, Pepys writes : "To the Duke's house and there saw the 'German Princess' acted by the woman herself ; but never was anything so well done in earnest, worse performed in jest upon the stage ; and indeed, the whole play, apart from the drollery of him

that acts her husband, is very simple, unless here and there a witty sparkle or two."

One wonders if John went to see it.

The play was soon withdrawn, and the whole story relegated to the limbo of nine-days' wonders. Mary had not the audacity to sue her alleged husband for maintenance, and sank back into the criminal courses on which, it is pretty safe to say, she had relied prior to meeting him. Twice again she was to stand in the dock of the Old Bailey. Of her life in the intervals we have no authentic record. Mr. Bernbaum, we have seen, treats her "biographies," so far as they relate to this period, as early specimens of the picaresque novel; but I am rather inclined to take them as fiction pretty well grounded upon fact. Certainly, Mary did not leave any diary or full confession of her misdeeds, nor is it probable that her victims in many of the incidents recorded would have courted publicity. Still, when one of the scribes assures us that he has been at great pains to hunt up the facts, we may well believe that he picked up a good many from the neighbours and gossips of the dupes, if not from the dupes themselves, in taverns and coffee-houses when the tragic fate of the poor crook was being shouted in the London streets.

It is the wealth of detail that makes these narrators suspect. They tell us things which only one of the parties could possibly know and which he or she would certainly not communicate. In its essentials, the story of the unfortunate Mr. Chamberlain, Mary's next serious victim after Carleton, sounds perfectly credible. First, we are told, before she left the theatre, Mary "had a large parcel of cullies that having heard of her fame and seen her person, were very desirous of a nearer acquaintance; and she who mightily loved company and gallantry, was free enough of access, yet treated

them all with a gallant indifferency ; of some, she would want a point-lace, a new gown, or some such other thing to act in ; at other times she would cunningly beg their watches and rings by commending them ; but not to belie her, she was not yet much guilty of the crime of incontinency, her husband, Carleton, often saying that she had no great inclination that way." Women cheats seldom have. Passion interferes too much with business. But like our modern "gold-diggers," Mary was occasionally held to her bargain. Mr. Chamberlain, of Southampton Street, "an old gentleman" tottering under the weight of fifty winters, got her to live with him as his mistress. Within a day or two, having sent him on a fool's errand to Brentford, she cashed a draft on his goldsmith for eighty pounds which he had left behind, and made off, in addition, with a gold watch, a seal of arms, some valuable plate, and twenty pounds in coin. No doubt she and others thought the aged gentleman rightly served for having prevailed over her "virtue."

For ten years, with a short interval, the woman preyed on the Londoners. When we consider that the City in Charles II's reign extended only from near Aldgate to Soho and from Clerkenwell to the river, it seems amazing that she could escape undetected such a length of time. We may speculate how the Plague and the Great Fire affected the numerous corporation of London rogues—were they burnt out of their crannies, or were they, on the contrary, lost sight of and their records forgotten in the general confusion and reconstruction ? Mary, at any rate, found no reason to change her venue till the year 1670, when she made her second appearance at the Sessions. She was convicted of stealing a silver tankard, sentenced to death, reprieved, and in February, 1671, transported to Jamaica.

She was not long lost to us. On the passage out she got to know of a plot among her fellow-convicts to seize the ship. Having reported this to the master, she was taken into his favour and, upon her arrival in the island, allowed a large measure of liberty. But the West Indies offered no field for her particular branch of roguery. She got away and landed in Holland, whence she found her way back to London.

Some of the stories told by her “biographers” are good enough to be repeated, whether they be accepted as history or not. Her most successful *coups* were executed with the aid of confederates of her own sex. One of these, a dame grown old in evil, in whose house she was lodging, spoke of her to a well-to-do young bachelor apothecary of Westminster—“a modest, virtuous young gentlewoman, with an estate of fifteen hundred pounds a year, just the wife for him.” The bachelor disclaimed all idea of marrying, but listened all the same. An introduction took place. The young gentlewoman, he now learnt, was hiding, lest she should be forced into a disagreeable match by a stern uncle, who had command of her revenues. Less gullible than Carleton, the apothecary, it seems, made discreet enquiries. The gentleman whom Mary named as her uncle did exist, he was a man of substance, and he had a niece. The man of boluses and blisters hesitated no longer. Money, he despised it, but his love for the retiring heiress, he said, ate him up. Coyly, Mary demurred to a hasty clandestine marriage, on the ground that she was at the moment penniless and could not buy a trousseau. That would be all right, the impatient man assured her, she could have as much money as she wanted. The old woman also extended her palm, and closed it well filled by the satisfied suitor. The marriage, we are told, took place. Two days later the bride proposed

that she go home and break the news to her uncle. The husband consented. Two or three days passed. Thinking that the disappointed old curmudgeon was trying to rob him of his wife, the apothecary knocked at his door. He had come for his wife, he told the old gentleman very firmly, and he would also trouble him to account for and hand over her revenues. The uncle listened, speechless for a while with astonishment and wrath. But the visitor was very positive—he was the lawful husband of the gentleman's niece. Very well, he should have the deceitful shameless baggage, who could thus deceive her loving uncle. Upstairs rushed the injured senior. He seized his niece by the shoulder, shook her, and informed her that her husband was below. "My husband," shrieked the girl, "Are you out of your wits?" "Do not lie to me," shouted uncle, and he straightway bundled her downstairs into the arms of the apothecary. "There's your wife—take her—as to her estate, that I shall keep in trust for your children!" The young man and the girl drew away from each other. "What jest is this, sir, that you play me?" demanded the bridegroom. "This is not my wife and well you know it. I never set eyes on this gentlewoman before." "Nor have I ever seen this gentleman," protested the girl. "But I have no other niece," explained the uncle. . . .

Mary is represented as "raking-off" from two to three hundred pounds on this and a similar transaction with a young man of Islington. This is not to be believed. With such sums at her command, she would soon have abandoned a profession of which the gallows was the almost inevitable end.

Less profitable was her coffin trick. Having passed herself off as a lady from the country, she one day in apparent

distress informed the woman of the house that a friend and most respected fellow-townsmen of hers was lying in a common alehouse where he had died suddenly. She was anxious that he should be honourably interred. Would the landlady allow the funeral to take place from her house? The landlady, probably delighting in funerals like most of her sort, consented and recommended "a topping undertaker" in Eastcheap as the best man to carry out the arrangements with due regard to the eminent respectability of the deceased. The coffin having been brought to the house, by whom or whence it is not stated, the undertaker proceeded to fit up a mortuary chamber with a heavy velvet pall, four silver candlesticks, and various pieces of heavy plate. Next morning all was gone, Mary included, except the coffin which was found to contain brickbats. One chronicler, improving on this bald narrative, adds that Mary made the pall into a handsome frock for herself.

On another occasion, she found that a watchmaker occupying the adjoining apartments had goods worth stealing. So one evening she invited him and the landlady to join her in a party of pleasure, taking care that only a maid was left behind. They had not long left the house when a gentlewoman arrived to visit her, and on learning that she was out, explained that she was her sister and wished to go up to her chamber to rest a while and write a billet. The servant made no objection, and saw without suspicion the visitor depart half an hour later. Presently Mary came home, having separated herself from her companions on some pretext or another. Learning that her sister had called, she told the maid she must go in search of her. When the watchmaker and the woman of the house returned, they had cause to lament not so much the disappearance of the lodger

as the loss of all the portable valuables the house contained. On this occasion Mary must have had considerable confidence in the honour of her confederate.

Her "landladies" were often her victims. "The landlady of the house where she once lodged, being a mantua-maker, she ordered two new gowns and petticoats to be made against her birthday, as she pretended, when several friends, she said, were to come and be merry with her. Several of her sharpening companions came richly habited, and a sumptuous banquet was provided for them, at which the landlady drank so freely that in the evening she laid herself upon the bed to repose; and being fast asleep, our 'princess,' with the help of her companions, carried off all the woman's plate and everything else that was portable."

Elsewhere we read that she "trepanned a young lawyer of Hesson in Middlesex of one hundred pounds." Tradesmen, especially mercers and shoemakers, were often the subjects of her skill. Her favourite dodge, still frequently practised upon jewellers, was to pretend she had left her purse at home, to take the tradesman with the selected goods in a coach to a house supposed to be hers, and at the last moment to trick him into parting with the goods, when she would escape by a lane or backdoor.

He must be hanged sooner or later, said Peachum of Captain Macheath. And the Captain himself and his followers expected no other end. But that every offender came at last to be apprehended is to claim, I fancy, too much for the English detective service two hundred or two hundred and fifty years ago. Every execution was probably witnessed with a certain sympathetic complacency by a score of rogues who had retired in good time from business and were living on the proceeds of their industry. Mary Carleton was not so lucky.

Her downfall was the result of accident. Searching a house in Southwark for another thief, a sheriff's officer noticed on a table in one of the rooms a letter addressed to a prisoner in the Marshalsea. This aroused his suspicions, and when a woman in a dressing-gown came in, he recognized her as the famous "German Princess." Despite her denials and protests, he took her to the Marshalsea and soon learnt that she was wanted for the theft of a piece of plate from a house in Chancery Lane. Handed over to the turnkey of Newgate, she was tried for the last time on January 16th, 1673, and sentenced to death. Having returned from transportation without leave, she stood no chance of pardon or reprieve. The customary Newgate plea that she was about to become a mother failed, and she was left for execution.

In the condemned cell she became one of the sights of London. All who could afford to bribe the gaoler came to have a look at her. To some smart ladies, who rallied her, she is reported to have said, "Ladies, your failings consist in falling, mine in filching." But in the awful gloom of Newgate she lost her courage and relapsed into utter wretchedness, sitting bent forward with her hood drawn over her face. Ever and again, she fetched a deep sigh, and was heard to moan, "Oh, if I might have my days to live over again!"

Perhaps she would have made a better use of them. But she would have died at last, and death, had she lived a hundred years, would have been just as unwelcome. This obvious reflection does not seem at any time or anywhere to have reconciled any human being to the immediate prospect of execution. The most which anybody has achieved in the circumstances has been fortitude. Yet, as one of the ancients remarks and as every condemned person knows, death by the axe or the cord is greatly less painful than death by

disease or natural causes. It is death without the dying. If Mary Carleton had been reprieved and found herself dying of a lingering and painful ailment, would she have regretted her escape from the hangman's rope? Probably not. The true philosopher has not yet died.

The consolations of religion were at least offered the doomed woman, according to the scribblers who in the taste of the time describe her last days in great detail. Gentlemen came and exhorted her, and asked her how she felt upon the eve of being launched into eternity. It was then discovered that she was a Papist. Two mysterious men, suspected of being Roman priests, ministered to her. They were permitted, even in that bigoted age, to give her the Sacrament. She was also attended by a woman, alleged by some to be her sister. She could not be teased into making a specific confession in order to satisfy public curiosity. It is noteworthy that while admitting she was Mary Modders, as alleged at the bigamy trial, she did not confess to bigamy and continued to refer to John Carleton as her husband. She forgave him, she said, and wore his portrait in a locket at her execution. This took place at Tyburn on January 22nd, 1673—the anniversary of her baptism, she told those about her, she having been born on January 16th, 1642. That would make her only twenty-one at the time of her meeting with the Carletons; but she seems to have impressed everyone as ten years older.

On her last morning she plucked up courage, and with five companions—all men—mounted the cart with a firm and cheerful bearing. She was dressed in an Indian striped gown, silk petticoat, and “white shoes with slaps, laced with green.” Halting in St. Giles's Street, she drained a cup of Canary sack.

Standing in the cart beneath the gallows, with the halter round her neck, she declared she died in perfect charity with all the world. Her husband, John, she hoped would walk in the paths of righteousness, but he stood in need of sober admonition. The hangman would not wait longer. As she felt the cart moving away from under her she clasped a Catholic book of devotion to her breast and cried out with her last breath on Jesus and Mary. Then she was left dangling in the air, to be slowly strangled. And the people looked on.

An hour later her body was cut down, and "all fees having been paid," perhaps by her sister, she was buried in St. Martin's Church. To hang a woman for stealing is, of course, plain murder; but what is one murder, more or less, to the account of law and order? More than a century later we were hanging boys of fourteen for the "awful offence" (I quote *The Times*) of burning a hayrick; and ten years ago the various European nations were merrily butchering men and girls as spies for doing work which they were paying their own people to do at that very moment.

THE COUNTESS-DUCHESS

(ELIZABETH CHUDLEIGH)

A third adorer had the girl,
A man of lowly station—
A miserable grov'ling Earl
Besought her approbation.

—W. S. GILBERT. *The Bab Ballads.*

I

MOST adventuresses belong to melodrama; one, however, seems rather a creature of the old-fashioned three-volume novel. In writing of the poor but aristocratic girl who secretly marries a sailor and tries to suppress the fact in order to marry a duke, many novelists of our parents' days were, consciously or unconsciously, plagiarizing the biography of Elizabeth Chudleigh, Countess of Bristol or Duchess of Kingston, whichever you like to call her. For this robust age, her story would not be strong meat enough; there are no murders in it, nor dead bodies to be found in the library or the shrubbery; Elizabeth certainly walked in slippery places, but she never stepped over the precipice of tragedy. The stink of blood dear to the novel reader of 1927 is absent.

She was born in George I's reign, about the year 1720, not impossibly in Devonshire, that county of pretty faces, to which her parents on both sides belonged. For her father was Colonel Thomas Chudleigh, of Ashton, and her mother a Chudleigh also, people of excellent lineage. Elizabeth's early years were spent largely at Chelsea, her father being

governor of the Military Hospital. Horace Walpole remembered playing with her and her brother, who must have died in childhood. She was only six herself when her father died. Mrs. Chudleigh, a woman of decision and energy, finding herself in reduced circumstances, did what the widows of military officers in reduced circumstances are still apt to do—she rented a house in that modish quarter, Leicester Fields, and took a paying guest. Her little daughter, meanwhile, was growing into a beauty, and, no doubt, the mother hoped, would one day redeem the family fortunes by a brilliant marriage.

While Elizabeth was still in her early teens, she received the addresses of a gallant whom a French “biographer” irritatingly describes as Sir A. M. One dreadful day this gentleman got a letter in the beloved’s handwriting. He read : “ Sir,—If you were only flattering me before I was attacked by the smallpox, by all means come and see me ; but if your love was as sincere as my own sentiments, stay away, for I am no longer the same E. C.” Down flopped the gallant in a swoon. In vain his valet “Tom” (to the French every English serving-man was Tom or Jack or both) applied restoratives, smelling-salts, burnt feathers, snuff, etc. The gallant went on swooning. Tom, with the resourcefulness proper to his kind, was seized of a brilliant idea. Rushing below stairs, he sought the aid of the landlady’s daughter, who had a remarkably sweet voice. Approaching the unhappy gentleman, she cooed “Elizabeth” in his ear. At the sound of the beloved name, he recovered consciousness. He looked around, but saw no one except Tom. He rose. Tom seized his arm and walked him round and round the room till he could swoon no longer and got back into his senses. Then he sat down and wrote : “ Miss,—Since you

are no longer the same person, I am not obliged to tell you whether I was flattering you or not ; but I do not flatter you in assuring you that you were never more beloved by—A. M.”

Elizabeth was indeed down with the disease which made such ravages in those days. Doubtless she was consoled by the billet which Tom brought her. She was still more consoled on discovering when she rose from her bed that her fair face had gone unscathed, that her beauty was undamaged. But her lover was not there to offer her his congratulations. He had died of the smallpox.

Perhaps to enable her daughter to recover from the double affliction, Mrs. Chudleigh took her off to the country—again Devonshire, it is supposed. Elizabeth might have become a county toast and the bride of a Tony Lumpkin if one day, when she was about nineteen, she had not in the course of her rambles come across a fine gentleman out shooting. (A meeting quite after the style of Ouida.) He was a rather elderly gentleman, then about fifty-five, but this the young lady might forgive when she discovered him to be William Pulteney, the well-known politician and courtier. Struck by the girl's beauty, he cultivated her acquaintance, and finding that her education had been neglected, set himself to improve it—an attempt often made by elderly men interested in young girls, generally to the exceeding annoyance of the patient. And though Pulteney was a man of brilliant conversation and parts, and used to girls, being the father of a daughter who died in 1742, he did not achieve much with Elizabeth's mind. She was easily bored. A voluminous book was her aversion. Her aim in her own words was to be “ short, clear, and surprising.”

Her wits, at any rate, needed no schooling. Pulteney, she and her mother knew to be a friend worth having. So

Elizabeth submitted to the disagreeable process of education, and so far humoured the prospective Earl of Bath as to get from him a recommendation to the Princess of Wales, mother of the third George. Miss Chudleigh was appointed a maid of honour to her royal highness and went to live at Leicester House, "the pouting-place of princes."

The post might not have been considered a safe one by some mothers. The Prince of Wales—the insignificant "Fed"—was inclined to look on his wife's household as his *seraglio*, and had already brought one of her ladies to grief. But Mrs. Chudleigh, I daresay, knew that her daughter was able to look after herself. Not impossibly, though, Elizabeth might have listened to the royal tempter had she not met with the Duke of Hamilton, then only in his twentieth year, and therefore her junior. By one account, she first aroused his interest by telling him about a lovelorn female whom she had saved from drowning in the Thames and had then befriended. The Duke fell in love with the maid of honour, and she, very probably, with him. The affair was encouraged by the Duke's aunt, Lady Archie Hamilton, who wanted to keep the Prince of Wales for herself and regarded Elizabeth as a dangerous rival. But his grace's guardians got wind of the business and packed him off on the Grand Tour. Vows of eternal fidelity were exchanged by the lovers. The girl, then, either to indulge her grief or by way of a change, went down with an aunt, Mrs. Hanmer, to Lainston, in Hampshire, to visit her cousins, the Merrills.

Lainston, one of the smallest parishes in England, lies about three miles north-west of Winchester. The Merrills' house, which is still standing, is a large red-brick house, faced with white stone. It was built in the time of Charles II. In the chapel at the end of the garden, now absolutely in

ruins, two of Elizabeth's grandparents were buried. What took place here is quite in accordance with the conventions of the older fiction. The young duke wrote impassioned love-letters, and these, it is alleged, were intercepted by the cruel aunt, because she did not believe his intentions were honourable. Miss Chudleigh, supposing herself to be forgotten (to accept her apologist's excuse), decided to amuse herself with a young naval officer, the Hon. John Augustus Hervey, whom she met in July, 1744, at Winchester races. Very much in love, Augustus got leave from his ship, the *Cornwall*, then lying at Portsmouth, and paid a visit to Lainston. Though only a lieutenant (and naval and military officers had not yet acquired the high social standing they possessed a century later), he was well connected, being the younger son, by a once-famous beauty, Molly Lepel, of a younger son of the Earl of Bristol. By the prudent Mrs. Hanmer he was regarded as an eligible suitor for her handsome niece. The two ladies were taken by him to see his ship. At the beginning, perhaps, Elizabeth had contemplated nothing more than what Hervey's pretty mother called a little "frizelation." Then he persuaded her to marry him.

But the marriage, she stipulated, was to be kept a secret. Otherwise she would forfeit her position in the princess's household and be doomed for years, it was not unlikely, to the lot of a grass-widow. These considerations having prevailed with her relatives at Lainston, the servants were got rid of in the evening of August 4th, and at eleven o'clock at night Augustus and Elizabeth were married at the chapel at the end of the garden by an obliging clergyman, Mr. Amis, in the presence of Mrs. Hanmer, Mr. Merrill, Mrs. Hanmer's maid, Ann Cradock, and a Mr. Mountenay, who stuck a taper in his hat to enable the parties to recognize each other.



ELIZABETH CHUDLEIGH

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Husband and wife, they walked back to the house, the only record of the marriage being in the minds of the witnesses. The chapel had never been used for such ceremonies before, nor was intended to be used for them, so no register existed, and Mr. Amis, on this occasion, saw no necessity for one.

Two days later the sailor was recalled to his ship. Ann Cradock afterwards deposed that she called him at five o'clock on the morning of his departure, that she found him in bed with Elizabeth, and that they seemed very sorry to take leave of each other. Evidently Elizabeth had not then the aversion for her husband which she was so soon to profess. Bearing this in mind, and also that her kinsfolk connived at a secret and hurried marriage, I suspect that she had given herself beforehand to her wooer in a moment of excitement, and that she went through the ceremony as a measure of precaution. This is never hinted by Hervey, who played the man of honour from first to last.

Already, it may be imagined, repenting of what she had done, Elizabeth returned to town and resumed her duties at Leicester House. Her name has already been mentioned by Walpole. Hearing that Pitt had been appointed Secretary for War, Prince Frederick guffawed, and observed that Miss Chudleigh was quite as well fitted for the job; more, he made her write a letter to Lord Harrington, requesting him to make out the patent for her—a letter which was signed by several persons at the table and actually sent. It is to be hoped that Elizabeth enjoyed the joke.

No news of her marriage had leaked out. It is not sure that she even confided in her mother, who was now living in Conduit Street. There, John Augustus probably visited her on his return from the West Indies in '45. He soon went to sea again, but kept coming and going in the winter of '46-'47.

Elizabeth now, if not before, discovered that she regarded him with unconquerable aversion. Her misery, she afterwards said, commenced from the arrival of Captain Hervey in England, and the greatest joy she experienced was the news of his departure. But whether Hervey loved his wife or not, his passion for her was still alive. In the spring of '47, he told her to come and see him at his apartment—"a black servant only in the house. On entering the room where he sat, the first thing done was to prevent her retreat by locking the door." This, as the Duchess used to say, when speaking of it with tears in her eyes, was an assignation with a vengeance. "He would not permit her to retire," continues a contemporary of Elizabeth, "without consenting to that commerce, delectable only when kindred souls melt into each other with the soft embrace."

More reliable evidence afterwards given in court has it, however, that the pair lived together at Conduit Street such time as the sailor was ashore, as late as May, 1747. If that was so, plainly Mrs. Chudleigh must have been in the secret. In the autumn of the same year, Elizabeth got leave of absence from her princess and retired to the familiar village of Chelsea. There she gave birth to a son, who was baptized on November 2nd, at Chelsea Old Church, as Henry Augustus, son of John Augustus Hervey. Within a few days the infant died, to the genuine grief of his mother. In December, Elizabeth went to Bath to recuperate. No one that saw her there suspected what she had gone through, and some one remarked that there were too few beaux at the watering-place to make her stay worth while.

Husband and wife accepted the child's death as the final severance of their bond. Hervey went again to sea and served with distinction. One day Miss Chudleigh, as everyone

called her, met her old flame, the Duke of Hamilton. Legend (and a true-sounding one) avers that the story of the intercepted letters now came out. It must have been a bitter moment for Elizabeth; a still more bitter one when, his grace having offered her marriage, she had to refuse him without giving a satisfactory reason. To her mortification, she saw him marry the lovely Miss Gunning instead. The Duke of Ancaster she also refused for a husband. Lord Howe is mentioned as one of her suitors.

As maid of honour to the Princess of Wales, she lived in the vortex of London social life. She played whist with Lord Chesterfield, "rioted with Lady Harrington and Miss Ashe." Nearing thirty and real marriage being out of the question, she seems, in the phrase of to-day, to have let herself go. It is notorious that she appeared at a subscription masque ball as Iphigenia, "almost in the unadorned simplicity of primitive nature. Whether to demonstrate how nearly allied she was to her ancestress, Eve, before the Fall, or whether from a religious veneration for the customs which prevailed in Eden; whatever was her motive, truth it is that she was everything but naked, and yet, like our first parents, she was not ashamed." Walpole says, "Miss Chudleigh was Iphigenia, but so naked you would have taken her for Andromeda." If it was her object to captivate, she was successful. Even the old King professed to be among her adorers. At another ball given, seemingly, in her honour, his Majesty made her a present of a watch worth thirty-five guineas—"actually disbursed out of his privy purse and not charged on the civil list!" This, the King declared, was worth a kiss; and he kissed Miss Chudleigh in the middle of the circle, one of the few things which were not "done" in the seventeen-fifties.

Had George been a younger man, Elizabeth might have become an English Pompadour, or at least a Castlemaine. He appointed her mother housekeeper of Windsor Castle. During her tenure of office, a girl child was found on the stairs leading to her apartments. Miss Chudleigh adopted the waif, with the result, of course, that everybody believed it to be her daughter's. Elizabeth was left motherless in 1756. Upon seeing her weeping in the drawing-room, Selwyn composed the following lines :

“ What filial piety, what mournful grace
For a lost parent sits on Chudleigh's face !
Fair virgin, weep no more, your anguish smother,
You in this town can never want a mother.”

These verses are quoted as proving with what ease a man could in those happy days acquire a reputation as a wit. Nowadays, Selwyn might have been employed to write “ sub-titles ” for the films.

Elizabeth was not left without powerful protectors. Her daring behaviour had not cost her the favour of the strong-minded Dowager Princess of Wales—widowed by the death of “ Fed ” in 1751. While she was staying at the Castle, people began to couple her name with the Duke of Kingston's. He was nine years her senior, “ a very weak man,” Horace tells us, “ of the greatest beauty and finest person in England.” Like so many great personages of the time, he remained unmarried, but kept a recognized mistress, Mme. de la Touche. When Miss Chudleigh was confined to her room at Windsor with a bad cold, it was reported that his Grace sat up with her all night. They were seen together at Tunbridge Wells and at Newark races. Mme. de la Touche disappeared. About the same time, rumour had it that the maid of honour was acquiring property and buying land. She could not be doing



MISS CHUDLEIGH AS "IPHIGENIA"

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this with the six hundred a year her mother had left her, even if she had taken to heart the lessons in economy and money-getting given her by her first mentor, the penurious Pulteney. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the Duke's aunt, looked on, drew her conclusions, and disapproved. Nobody seems to have asked why his Grace of Kingston did not marry his new charmer, who was of good enough family and the intimate of the first lady in the land. And then tall powdered heads drew closer together at routs and tea parties, and there was much whispering behind fans of a little milliner who had caught the Duke's fancy, and of the egregious Miss Chudleigh being left out in the cold.

The little milliner proved to be no match for Elizabeth, even though she had reached her thirty-ninth year. But the temporary defection of her Duke must have reminded her that her place in the world was yet to make. "There is no keeping off age by sticking roses and sweet peas in one's hair, as Miss Chudleigh does," cruelly wrote Walpole. All these years she must have heard a good deal of her husband, probably met him several times. He was now a Member of Parliament and a Sea Lord. Death was clearing his way towards the peerage. The first Earl of Bristol had died, the present Earl was said to be in failing health, and John Augustus was the heir. Time had not weakened the woman's dislike of her sailor husband, but she thought a countess's coronet might well become her in old age. A shrewd scheming woman was Elizabeth, anxious always to have an extra string to her bow.

Now, before it should be too late, she resolved to secure proof of the marriage she had been at such pains to conceal. In February, 1759, she posted down to Winchester where her cousin Merrill was living, and put up at the "Blue Boar."

In the house opposite, Amis, the clergyman who had performed the ceremony, lay, as it was asserted, on his death-bed. Having first talked with Mrs. Amis, Elizabeth and Merrill were introduced into the sick room, and asked the dying man to sign a certificate which Mr. Merrill had prepared. Amis objected to this as irregular, and also on the curious ground that it was unlawful to sign a certificate of marriage in presence of one of the parties. A lawyer was fetched. He made short work of the latter scruple, and then producing a substantial volume, engrossed it with the title: "Register of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in the Chapel of Lainston." To make it look more genuine, a first entry was made of the burial of Mrs. Merrill, and then Mr. Amis was induced to record the marriage of John Augustus Hervey and Elizabeth Chudleigh. A copy was made of this entry and handed to Elizabeth. Upon the parson's death, the register was handed over to Mr. Merrill, and upon his death, which was also recorded in it, to the new incumbent of Lainston.

Elizabeth's precautions, as it turned out, were very much worse than useless. They proved very nearly fatal to her. The Earl of Bristol's health improved. He might very well marry and have children. Hervey seemed as far off from succeeding as ever. And the Duke returned to his allegiance. He spent a lot of time with Miss Chudleigh in a country house she had taken near Colnbrook. Everybody knew she was his mistress. Everybody knew, but she was not so flagrantly indiscreet as to forfeit her standing in that easy-going society. She bought land in Knightsbridge, and at her house there in 1760 gave a splendid ball in honour of the Prince of Wales—so soon to be George III. "It was magnificent," writes Walpole, "and well understood—no crowd—and though a sultry night, no one was for a moment

incommoded. The virgin mistress began the ball with the Duke of York, but nobody did dance much. . . . Miss Chudleigh desired the dancers would go up into the garrets—‘No, they are not garrets—it is only the roof of the house hollowed for upper servants—but I have no upper servants.’ Everybody ran up. . . . Vases of flowers for nosegays, and in one retired nook a most critical couch ! ”

In middle age, Elizabeth is a genial but hardly graceful figure. In 1765, she was taking the waters at Carlsbad, and profited by her journey to visit the courts of Dresden and Berlin. The great Frederick speaks of her in a letter to his sister, dated July 22nd, 1765 : “ . . . an English lady, named Madame Chudleigh, who after having emptied a couple of bottles, staggered while dancing and was on the point of falling to the floor. This episode much amused the public, who are little accustomed to see ladies travelling alone, and who still less like women wine-bibbers instead of the graces and fine manners which sit so well on them.” The Prussian court was perhaps more censorious than the British. Excesses of this sort were by no means uncommon among our ladies of rank in the mid-eighteenth century. Beside them, the modern night-club-and-cocktail girl would rank as a milk-and-water miss.

But while Elizabeth laughed and grew fat, drank, and laid field upon field, her unacknowledged husband began to weary of a bachelor existence. As early as 1768 some rumour of the secret marriage had got abroad. Hervey may have spoken ; more likely, that indiscreet visit to Winchester had set people thinking and talking. Walpole first mentions the scandal thus : “ Augustus Hervey, thinking it the *bel air*, is going to sue for a divorce from Miss Chudleigh. He asked Lord

Bolingbroke, t'other day, who was his proctor? as he would have asked for his tailor. The nymph has sent him word that if he proves her his wife, he must pay her debts—and she owes sixteen thousand pounds.”

This threat might have quieted Hervey, had he not fallen deeply in love with a Miss Moysey, the daughter of a physician at Bath. He notified his wife that he proposed to divorce her with as little scandal as possible—though that must undoubtedly have been considerable, seeing that the thing could only be done by a special Act of Parliament. Evidently Elizabeth had been expecting this definite intimation and had taken counsel. For she now astonished Hervey's envoy, Dr. Caesar Hawkins, by a counter proposal. Hervey simply wanted to be in a position to marry the girl of his choice. This object could be equally well achieved by Elizabeth's challenging him to prove the marriage and by his then failing to do so. This proposal was duly submitted to Hervey. He gave his consideration to it, and sent Hawkins away, after observing that he would do nothing inconsistent with his character as a gentleman—a very unusual attitude for divorce petitioners !

In fact, he was in collusion with his wife in the suit that followed. That suit was the unusual one known as Jactitation of Marriage. Elizabeth Chudleigh complained to the consistory court that John Augustus Hervey was falsely representing her to be his wife. The defendant put up a half-hearted defence. He told the story of the marriage at Lainston, indeed, but mentioned as witnesses only Mrs. Hanmer and Mr. Merrill, both of whom he knew to be dead. He was careful not to cite Ann Cradock, though she was now married to his own servant. Elizabeth, of course, denied the whole story—denied it on oath, a course to which she

consented most unwillingly, and only because her proctors had told her she could not succeed otherwise. Thereupon the court enjoined perpetual silence upon John Augustus Hervey, and the world laughed.

One person certainly showed himself quite unconvinced by the finding. This was Moysey, the father of the girl whom Hervey wanted to marry. He refused to give his daughter ; “nay,” says our principal informant, in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, “has offered her five thousand pounds not to marry Mr. Hervey, but Miss Rhubarb is as much above worldly decorum as the rest, and persists, though there is no more doubt of the marriage of Mr. Hervey and Miss Chudleigh than that of your father and mother.” But the medical gentleman apparently wore down his daughter’s resolution, for Hervey recoiled at the last moment from what he counted as bigamy. He never married, and at his death left his property to his child by another woman named Kitty Hunter.

Elizabeth, however, did not scruple to reap the reward of her daring and ingenuity. It may be that some rumour of an earlier marriage had all this time kept her Duke from making her his Duchess. Certain it is that on March 8th, 1769, less than a month after silence had been enjoined on Hervey, they were married. Society sniggered when the bride, aged forty-nine, was seen in virginal white trimmed with Brussels lace and pearls, but everyone applauded her cleverness. At the reception that followed, she was presented to their Majesties, who wore her wedding favour. Hervey chose to be there, and said he had come to have a last look at his widow !

Elizabeth Chudleigh was Duchess of Kingston-upon-Hull. In her fiftieth year she had won the coronet of which she had been cheated in her twenties.

II

Her married life was much the same as that of any other peeress of mature years. She and her second husband got on very well together. They lived mostly in the country, at Thoresby, the family seat in Nottinghamshire. A very unflattering portrait of her at this period is drawn by a man named Whitehead, a discharged servant of her husband's ; she is represented as domineering, vulgar, and stingy ; remembering, however, Walpole's description of his Grace as a very weak man, I am disposed to think that his new wife found it necessary to deal pretty sharply with his old retainers when it came to taking charge of his household. Besides, Whitehead admittedly published his memoirs for money ; and then as now, the public wouldn't buy memoirs about living people unless they were full of pepper and vinegar.

The new Duchess's reign was brief. The Duke died at Bath on September 23rd, 1773, at the age of sixty-one. Elizabeth did her best to soothe his last moments, and was extensively sneered at by her contemporaries for her display of grief. Why, even if a woman is stingy and coarse and has been unchaste, she shouldn't be genuinely fond of her husband and sorry when he dies I can't for the life of me understand. Apparently the Duke was satisfied with her devotion since he left her his real estate for life and his personal property absolutely. She was now worth about seventy thousand pounds. The title expired with the Duke. His next heir was his sister's son, Evelyn Meadows, towards whom he had turned a cold shoulder, but who, notwithstanding, felt deeply aggrieved and disappointed by the terms of his will.

The widow, not suspecting what was brewing, went on her travels in search of distraction. In Rome, she was cordially received by Pope Clement XIV, a genial pontiff. The Duchess proved herself anything but stingy towards the Romans, and delighted them by bringing her yacht up the Tiber to exhibit to them. Her Grace must have been the first, or nearly the first, Englishwoman to have a ship of her own, or to take pleasure on the sea, even the practice of sea-bathing being hardly general as yet, and marred in most people's mind by the fear of being swept away by the tide. Perhaps in the smiles of Roman Pope and populace, she might have followed Queen Christina's example and gone over to Rome, had not the most alarming news reached her. Evelyn Meadows had started proceedings to upset the will and to indict her for bigamy.

Elizabeth hurried back to London to consult her attorney, Field. "Christina, Duchess of Kingston, is arrived in a great fright," chuckles Walpole (July, 1774). "The Duke's nephews are going to prove her first marriage and hope to set the will aside. It is a pity her friendship with the Pope had not been earlier—he might have given her a dispensation. If she loses her cause, the best thing he can do for her is to give her the veil." The harassed woman learnt that her enemies had got hold of Ann Cradock, and relied largely upon her testimony for a conviction. By one account, the woman turned traitor because the Duchess refused to pay her a larger pension than twenty pounds a year ; but it seems proved that she was summarily dismissed by her Grace upon her discovering that she had already accepted bribes from the other side. Square the woman, was Field's advice. But the dowager's blood was up. She scorned compromise. A warrant was out for her. She decamped, as her enemies put

it, in the middle of the night, just six hours before the arrival of the constables, and went back to Rome, there to await events.

The next was the death of the second Earl of Bristol. Her husband succeeded. Her enemies, and they were legion, must have sighed. Apparently it was impossible to deprive this woman of a coronet. She was more concerned by the news that a true bill against her had been found at the Sessions. She was advised to return at once. But the crisis found her short of ready cash. That her situation was precarious was already known in Rome. Jenkins, the English banker, to whom she hurried, denied himself to her on various pretexts. Elizabeth showed the mettle of her fighting sires. She forced her way into the banker's parlour and presenting a brace of pistols at his head, compelled him to honour her cheque. Then, seriously ill, she once more set forth on the long fatiguing journey to the north. All the way she was tortured by fears of what might happen to her. Bigamy, as in poor Mary Carleton's time, was still nominally a capital offence ; but in practice it had ceased to be so, since under a Statute of William and Mary, "benefit of clergy" could be pleaded by both men and women. (An offender who couldn't read or write could even then, I suppose, be hanged.) However, a disagreeable penalty still attached to it, in the form of burning in the hand. But a talk with Lord Mansfield, whom she met at Calais, calmed our noble offender, and she crossed over into the English jurisdiction, immediately to be admitted to bail on sureties furnished by Mansfield, the Duke of Newcastle, and Lord Mountstuart.

The next step of her lawyers was to object to the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts. If the charge were proved, then the accused remained Countess of Bristol. In either



AUGUSTUS JOHN HERVEY, EARL OF BRISTOL
(After the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds)

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event a peeress, she claimed to be tried by the House of Lords. The claim was at last admitted, much to the disgust of Elizabeth's old associates, who had been looking forward to seeing her in the Old Bailey dock. Lord Mansfield pooh-poohed the whole proceedings. "Suppose," he argued in the House of Lords, "a conviction is the result—the lady makes your lordships a curtsey and you return a bow."

It is a proof of the Duchess's pluck that she did not attempt while awaiting trial to buy off the hostile witnesses. That they could have been bought off, I cannot doubt. And she had the longer purse. The same stubbornness was displayed during this interval in her affair with Foote the actor. He wrote a play entitled *A Trip to Calais*, wherein the Duchess, under the name of "Lady Kitty Crocodile," was plainly meant and held up to odium. The name "Crocodile" was given in mockery of the woman's grief for her husband. "Everything puts her so much in mind of her loss," runs one of the lines, "why, if she met by accident with one of his boots, it always set her a' crying." The actor may not have actually proposed blackmail to himself; but it is admitted that he allowed the play to be brought to the notice of the woman attacked before he could stage it. Elizabeth, instead of bribing him, got the play suppressed by the Lord Chamberlain. She then deputed two journalists—one a parson named Jackson—to call on Foote and to enquire if he still proposed to publish the play which he could not put on the stage. He said he did; thereupon, the journalists informed him that he would be attacked in print and driven off the boards. The actor quailed. He wrote to the Duchess, announcing that out of pity for her he would suppress the play, provided that she called off the newspaper men. Elizabeth's reply is a model of its kind. Here are some extracts: "I am writing

to the descendant of a merry-andrew and prostitute the term of manhood by applying it to Mr. Foote. . . . Though I would have given liberally for the relief of your necessities, I scorn to be bullied into a purchase of your silence. . . . I will keep the pity you send till the morning before you are turned off."

This message annoyed Mr. Foote, and in his rejoinder he must be excused for having slightly misunderstood the first passage above quoted. Elizabeth had not said he was the son of 'the pleasant connexion of a merry-andrew and a prostitute.' "Prostitutes and players," he said, "too much live by pleasing the public; not but your grace may have heard of ladies who by *private practice* have accumulated great fortunes." His mother, he begged leave to acquaint her grace, was a respectable gentlewoman, who died at eighty, and what would no doubt surprise her, was never married but once in her life. The honours of the correspondence remained, perhaps, with Foote; but the war declared upon him by the Press broke his spirit. He died a ruined man on October 21st, 1777.

The trial came on at last before the Peers Assembled, at Westminster Hall, on April 15th, 1776. When their lordships entered in solemn procession, the Lord High Steward (Earl Bathurst), attended by Garter King of Arms, bringing up the rear, Her Majesty, Queen Charlotte, was observed to be among the spectators who filled the galleries. Hannah More was there. She had got in on David Garrick's ticket, and noted that the prisoner was dressed in "deep mourning, a black hood on her head, her hair modestly dressed and powdered, a black silk sacque with crape trimmings, black gauze, deep ruffles, and black gloves." Her Grace's bearing was dignified and composed—not more, perhaps, than had been that other

bigamist's, more than a hundred years before, when she stood in peril of the gallows. The leniency of these latter days had mitigated the penalty for her alleged offence, the Lord High Steward remarked in his charge, adding : " That consideration, madam, will tend greatly to lessen the perturbation of your spirits on this awful occasion."

The proceedings took up four days. During this time " the prisoner " was in the custody of her friend, Black Rod, whom she accommodated in her own house. The vast majority of her judges were, of course, well known to her, and she could count on the friendliness of a large proportion. She had to fear the consequences of a conviction more than the conviction or sentence in that House. Her first plea was that the finding of the ecclesiastical court in her jactitation suit barred all further proceedings. This objection having been learnedly debated and overruled, her marriage with Hervey was proved by Ann Cradock and also by the widow of Thomas Amis, who was now the wife of the late Duke's steward, Phillips. The register which the accused had caused to be prepared was put in as evidence against her. Both these witnesses were severely cross-examined in order to prove that they had been suborned with promises of reward by the prosecution. Mrs. Phillips practically admitted this, but the more illiterate Ann maintained her disinterestedness with peasant-like obstinacy and stolidity.

Elizabeth, who was sneered at by Hannah More for " play-acting," because she kept her dignity and rose to the solemnity of the occasion, read her defence. She pleaded that she had always believed her former marriage to be void, a belief in which she had been encouraged by his grace of Canterbury. But she did not, as we should say, put the primate (Dr. Cornwallis) in the box. There is no reason to doubt that she was

sincere. Nowadays, of course, the ceremony in the unlicensed chapel at Lainston would have no binding force whatever ; even then, it was plainly irregular. It must be allowed to tell in Elizabeth's favour, though other motives may be suspected, that it was only after she had enquired fully into the circumstances of her first marriage that she married the Duke.

Legally there could be, I suppose, only one verdict. The Duke of Ancaster, the Earls of Pembroke, Coventry, March, and Peterborough, Viscount Falmouth and Baron Masham, did not vote. The other peers called on, one by one, rose, each in his place and with his hand on his heart, replied : " Guilty, upon my honour "—the Duke of Newcastle alone qualifying his verdict by the rider, " erroneously but not intendedly."

Prepared for the verdict, Elizabeth at once handed up a slip of paper, claiming the benefit of her " peerage." This was an old privilege, extending to peers *even if they could not read*, the immunities conceded to clerks. The Attorney-General disputed, *pro forma*, let us hope, whether a peeress could claim the benefit intended for unlettered peers, but the point was decided in the prisoner's favour. Presumably none of her judges wanted this elderly woman to be burnt in the thumb, though a good many lettered spectators in the gallery were indubitably disappointed. The elaborate farce was terminated much as Lord Mansfield had predicted. The prisoner was ordered to pay the court fees and told not to do it again. As was said of a peer tried before the same tribunal for the same offence in our own day, she had chosen her judges well.

Thus was Elizabeth Chudleigh in her fifty-sixth year delivered from the hands of the law. The legal effect of the verdict was that she took two steps down in the peerage and

was to be regarded as Elizabeth Hervey, Countess of Bristol. No thought of accepting that position or of conciliating her legal husband occurred to her. His lordship of Bristol, on the other hand, is said to have been troubled by fears that he might have to pay his wife's costs and other debts as well. It was to be expected that he would now take steps to divorce her. Evelyn Meadows, too, exasperated by the futility of the prosecution which cost him about twelve thousand pounds, threatened a civil suit to upset his late uncle's will. He might as well try to upset the Rock of Gibraltar, her lawyers told Elizabeth; but she, finding the air of England distinctly unwholesome, departed in secret, being conveyed across to Calais in an open boat by the skipper of her yacht. She never returned to her country, nor was she deprived of her wealth or otherwise molested. Hervey, learning that she had fled beyond the seas, had the citation posted on the pillars of the Royal Exchange, and began a suit to rescind the former sentence of the ecclesiastical court, but he died in 1779 before the proceedings were terminated. His wealth, as far as he could dispose of it, went to his natural children, and his title to that queer prelate, the Bishop of Derry.

The twelve years which remained to Elizabeth, though passed in exile, were probably the happiest of her life. On the Continent she was generally liked and universally welcome; while, despite her wealth and her high station, she had never been popular with her own countrymen. This she candidly admitted in these after years. She attributed it to her refusal to conform to the English notion of Sabbath observance; she adds, moreover, "I had a very fine neck and arms, and gave offence by my natural desire to display them." Perhaps she was thinking of her appearance in the rather less than semi-nude at the masquerade in George II's time.

Her first reception at Calais, nevertheless, was chilling. Dessin, the hotel keeper who figures in Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, himself a most unsentimental man and generally disliked by his numerous British guests, took her quondam Grace to be a fugitive from justice, or, at the best, a ruined bankrupt woman. At first, therefore, he pretended he had no room for her in his house; then, finding he was misinformed about her, he threw open his doors and by an excess of cordiality wheedled not less than a thousand pounds out of her by way of a loan, so we are told. The sum sounds incredible; I half suspect that there is a confusion here with French *livres*—this would make it about forty pounds, a much more likely amount. Unable to refund the money, he invited her to take the value in firewood! She might, one thinks, have chosen to stay at the hotel till the debt was repaid. Instead, she bought a large house from a M. de Cockove, and invited the late owner and his family to share it with her. But this was by no means the ultimate limit of the generosity of a woman whom her own countrymen reviled for niggardliness. She interested herself in the sons, and bestirred herself to obtain commissions for them in the French army.

Presumably, she was not staying at Calais because she liked it, but only till she knew how affairs were going in England. Or, while her new yacht was building at Plymouth. When it was brought to Calais a difficulty arose. England was at war with her revolted colonies, and an American privateer was hovering about, obviously intending to pounce on the vessel as soon as it was outside the three-mile limit. Very well, said the countess-duchess, we will run up the French flag. But the English skipper would not sail under any flag but his own; so he was relieved, and a French captain and a French crew got together. Presently, with

“a numerous retinue,” Elizabeth sailed for the Baltic, on a visit to the Empress of Russia, a woman of character similar to her own and for whom, therefore, she professed a very great and genuine admiration. Catharine II made her heartily welcome at the court of Petersburg. She liked her so well that she directed that her yacht should be repaired free of charge in the Imperial dockyards, and did no more than smile when Patiomkin, one of her cast-off favourites, offered his *devoirs* to the Englishwoman. Meantime, Elizabeth gave balls and banquets and entertained magnificently. Russia pleased her so much that she bought an estate in Esthonia, which she named “Chudleigh,” and set up a vodka distillery there. But even in Russia she was pursued by the animosity of her countrymen. An adventurer calling himself Major Semple, who is said by some to have sat for the portrait of Thackeray’s “Barry Lyndon,” had married a god-daughter of hers, and now quartered himself upon her. Not finding her Grace as pliant as he had hoped, he returned to England and gratified the public by representing her in a most unamiable light.

From Petersburg, Elizabeth travelled to other European courts. Everywhere, we are told, she was received as Duchess of Kingston, in spite of the verdict recorded against her, except at Vienna, where Maria Thèréa greeted her as Countess of Bristol. The Electress of Saxony was an old friend of hers. A droll story is told of her reception in 1780, at some place near Riga, by the wealthy and eccentric Prince Radziwill (he who launched the hapless Tarakanova on her catastrophic career, and now restored to imperial favour). He told her he was going to receive her without ceremony, and came with a train of forty coaches each drawn by six horses, escorted by a troop of Hussars, and followed by six hundred

saddle horses, a thousand dogs, and a number of wild boars. Piggy, one supposes, did not much relish his company. Having burnt down an improvised village for her entertainment, the Prince made the Duchess an offer of his hand ; but though she was never too old to be flattered by such a proposal, she told him she had had enough of matrimony. Oginski, that other acquaintance of Tarakanova's, is also mentioned as knowing the Duchess.

Falling out of favour, for some reason unknown, at the Russian court, Elizabeth settled down in Paris. She had a house at Montmartre and a fine estate called Ste. Assise, about two leagues from Fontainebleau, which she acquired from Monsieur, the King's brother. Such a woman, rich, good-natured, clinging desperately to her almost vanished powers of coquetry, is the obvious prey of the adventurer. In her sixties she had to pay heavily in cash for the adulation of a mountebank who went about "disguised as a pilgrim," and whispered that he was the Prince of Albania and the Despot of Montenegro. He was also known as Warta, likewise Zannovich. When he killed himself in prison at Amsterdam, it turned out that his real name was Stiepan. "I loved him more than I ever loved any man—not excepting his Grace of Hamilton," the old woman told a Frenchwoman, Mme. d'Oberkirch. She told the same lady a number of other things about herself, and had some hard things to say about England—"that slipshod country"—which, indeed, showed her an unfriendly face. The English, she observed, "are for ever seeking amusement without finding it, whilst the French possess it without the fatigue of running after it."

The French liked and admired her. Mme. d'Oberkirch tells us that at sixty-six years of age she still retained traces of more than ordinary beauty, and that her bearing was of the



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finest. "She moved with the grace and dignity of a goddess, and our own fair queen (Marie Antoinette) alone could rival her in the just proportions of her figure." From the same source we get an improbable story. Elizabeth, hearing that her old enemy, Evelyn Meadows, had been arrested at Metz for debt—and what should he have been doing at Metz?—intervened with the King to secure his release and herself discharged his debts.

Living very much after the style of Old King Cole, and like that jocund monarch, patronizing music in the person of Gluck, the Duchess, dethroned or dowager, spent her last years at Ste. Assise. Her acquisition of property in France involved her in litigation, and her end was precipitated by an adverse decision. She determined, though her health was failing, on going at once to Paris to lodge an appeal. Putting up at the Hotel du Parlement d'Angleterre, she fainted. A glass of Madeira revived her, but she insisted, against the advice of her attendants, on taking a second. She died of an apoplexy a few minutes later, on August 28th, 1788, in or about her sixty-ninth year.

Her will was strangely drawn and much disputed. She left mementoes to the Pope, and fifteen thousand pounds to Evelyn Meadows, who had done his best to ruin her. This was no isolated example of magnanimity in one whom Walpole called the Messalina of her age. "Whatever might have been her faults," remarks the writer of her obituary notice in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, "few will deny that she possessed a noble munificence of spirit that would have transferred lustre to the proudest title. She was splendidly generous and unostentatiously charitable. She remembered favours with gratitude; and was not only capable of forgiving, but of assisting a fallen foe."

That seems to be true, and I find it a little hard to account for the dislike which so many of her contemporaries felt for her. It could not have been her heavy eating and drinking, nor even her amours, that scandalized her generation. Possibly, her brilliant match with the Duke excited the envy of ladies who had found the favour of the royal princes less profitable. Or it may have been, as she suggests, her fine neck and arms. Well-bred English people are good haters, especially for trivial causes. I knew a man who was pursued by hatred because of the high note in his voice.

“ ELIZABETH THE SECOND ”

I

SHE is styled the Princess Tarakanova by historians, but the name was not of her choosing. In the autumn of the year 1772, she appears in Paris, an engaging slender figure, dark-haired, with some freckles and already, perhaps, the hectic flush of the consumptive. Her eyes changed from black to brown and from brown to black as you looked into them—and very few looked into them without coming near to loving her. She seemed then to be about three and twenty, but was four years older, according to a not wholly reliable account she gave of herself on another occasion. Her dark hair and aquiline profile gave her an Italian look ;¹ but she came, she said, from Circassia, the country of lovely women, and described herself as the Princess Aly Emetté of Vlodimir. The Parisians shrugged their shoulders : Circassia was a long way off and no one was in a position to challenge her rank. Some whispered that she was no princess, but something much more intriguing—a runaway odalisque from the Grand Turk’s harem. Anyway, she appeared to have plenty of money, and was attended by two gentlemen of most respectable aspect, the Baron von Embs, who passed as a relative, and an older man, the Baron Schenck.

Men, at any rate, flocked to her salon on the Ile St. Louis.

¹ Prince Galitzin’s report to the Empress Catharine.

She spoke French, German, and some Italian, sang very well, and played the harp divinely. This last accomplishment was enough to attract Count Casimir Oginski, a musician of talent to whom is attributed the invention of the harp's pedals. He was one of the Polish nobles who had taken refuge in Paris upon the first partition of their country and its subjection to Russia, then ruled by the formidable Catharine II. By our leading authority,¹ we are positively assured that it was not Oginski who put it into the adventuress's head to play the part she afterwards did ; but that course may have been inspired and facilitated by gossip with him about the affairs of Russia and about the late Empress Elizabeth of gallant memory.

There was, too, a Count Rochefort-Velcourt, who could gossip about the German courts ; for he, the Catholic scion of a Huguenot family settled on the other side of the Rhine, was the representative of that anything but puissant prince, Philip Ferdinand of Limburg Styrum. Another constant visitor was an elderly beau, Monsieur Marine, whose chief recommendations were his wit and knowledge of the world. Neither of these gentlemen had any money ; but that, her titular highness, strangely unlike other adventuresses, never seems to have insisted upon as a condition of her friendship. However, she did know some men of fortune, such as Mackay and Poncet, and they paid their footing by making liberal advances in anticipation of remittances expected by her from Persia.

Imagine, therefore, the consternation of these opulent persons when it became known that the respectable Embs, the princess's chamberlain, had been arrested and lodged in

¹ The German translation and digest of the Russian state papers published by order of Alexander II in 1867.

gaol. He was no baron, the police scornfully explained, but a Flemish swindler named Vantoers, who was wanted in various countries on charges of fraud and embezzlement. At this crisis, the elderly beau proved himself a friend indeed. Though he had no money, he was well known in Paris, so the police accepted his bail for the pseudo baron. But now, scores of creditors were hammering at the Princess's door. Rochefort-Velcourt, with a lover's eagerness, proposed Frankfort-on-the-Main as an asylum. Marine, old as he was, decided to follow the strange girl's star—as everywhere, all through her life, men were willing to do. The two gentlemen, each wishing the other to the devil, went on ahead to prepare quarters for her highness ; presently she arrived with the two barons, having sold everything she possessed in Paris ; and immediately after came Mackay and Poncet, clamouring for their money.

At the instance of the French Embassy, the miserable Vantoers was once more laid by the heels and lodged in the Frankfort gaol. At their expensive inn, the Princess and her adherents searched their pockets and found not a coin. The drafts from Persia were no doubt on their way, but the hard-hearted landlord would not wait. In desperation, Rochefort-Velcourt wrote to his Sovereign. And just as they were about to be turned into the street, the princeling appeared at the door.

Hardly even a princeling. Philip Ferdinand had magnificent pretensions to estates in Holstein and Prussia, but in the Holy Roman Empire he was so far recognized only as Count of Limburg Styrum and Oberstein. But within these very limited dominions he was sovereign, and behaved as such in all respects, keeping up an army of which he constituted himself the entire staff, conferring titles and maintaining, as

we have seen, agents at foreign courts. He was a man of forty-two, unmarried, a devout Catholic, highly emotional, and very much the man of honour. Having said this, I need hardly add that he was as poor as a church mouse.

A glance at the lady presented by Rochefort-Velcourt was enough. With a lordly gesture he paid the innkeeper's bill and invited her highness to become his guest at his castle of Neuses in Lower Franconia. No one troubled about Vantoers, who was left in gaol for a few months longer. Schenck stayed behind at Frankfort, to wait upon events, while Rochefort-Velcourt and Marine escorted their mistress to the princely residence. Upon their arrival, "the ambassador to France" represented himself as betrothed to the lady; whereupon Philip Ferdinand, quite after the manner of Louis Quatorze, clapped him into a tower, as a prisoner of state, in some small corner of his small realm.

We do not hear that Aly Emetté protested. Perhaps she was glad to get rid of her admirer now that a sovereign prince was so patently in love with her. At first it was hardly necessary for her to explain herself. Philip Ferdinand was ready to swallow anything his "dear Aly" might tell him. (Sometimes he calls her Betty, an odd name for a Circassian.) But when his grave adviser, an ecclesiastic named Hornstein, came along, she felt constrained to give some account of herself. The last representative of the house of Vlodimir, she was the sole heiress to the fief of Azov in Russia, which had been temporarily sequestered four years after her birth in 1745. The time had now come for her to be put once more in possession of her estates and revenues, and steps to this end were being taken on her behalf at the court of Russia. "I am not the *princess* but the *lady* of Azov," she modestly protested. "Her majesty the Empress of Russia

is my sovereign and suzerain." She had a wonderful uncle in Persia, who was looking after her treasures.

All her vast resources she promised to place at the prince's disposal to help him get possession of the disputed estates in Holstein. But the money was difficult to get at, and he must help her meanwhile. He seems to have helped her very liberally indeed. By this time he was madly in love with her. That she became his mistress seems clear ; and then not only love but conscience urged him to marry her. Hornstein, though prepossessed in the lady's favour by the respect she showed him and her avowed intention of becoming a Catholic, laid a restraining hand on his highness's arm. The stranger had told them who she was, but the marriage could not take place without her furnishing proofs of her identity. This was the more necessary, even the lovesick Philip Ferdinand agreed, as odd rumours were getting about that his beloved had been known under various aliases—Mlle. Scholl, Mlle. Frank, Mlle. Tremoille—in London, Berlin, and Ghent.

These calumnies, the girl protested, had been circulated by Baron von Embs—who, unknown to her, had now been set at liberty by the generous prince. Certainly, she would send to Russia for her papers ; and she showed his highness the copy of a letter she said she had addressed to Prince Galitzin at the Imperial Court—to the Galitzin she was actually to meet in grim earnest not so long after ! But, somehow, there came no papers nor answer from Russia, and the treasures from Persia must have been lost on the way.

Meanwhile, "Aly" busied herself with schemes for making the prince's fortune—and perhaps her own. To these Philip Ferdinand lent himself readily enough. By means of Oginski, decorations and titles were put on sale in Paris. One of the orders specially created for this traffic with the high-sounding

title of the Order of Ancient Nobility and the Four Emperors floated about Europe long enough to be mentioned in a scandal which occupied the Belgian courts as lately as 1858. "Even if the prince marries someone else," writes the lady of Azov in French to Hornstein on August 7th, 1773, "I shall fulfil my promises to him as soon as I come into my own." She bids her distracted lover have confidence in her "system," admitting that she has not told the whole truth about herself but just as much as it is convenient that the world should know. Like jesting Pilate, she asks, What is truth?

The unhappy prince seemed not to know. Half inclined to treat her as an impostor, tortured by her coldness, he is soon at her feet again. Under date September 9th, he writes, "My love for you, my dear child, is redoubled every day, despite the pain you have caused me. I could die of anguish when I realize that reason and love may not agree. Try, then, you who are goodness itself, to find a remedy. We must think seriously of our future happiness. You must let me, this time, put my conscience in order, and find a way of loving you in all sincerity, in all purity." He is resolved thenceforward to live as a good Christian; their union can alone procure him happiness in this world.

Such ardour, one thinks, might have dispensed with baptismal certificates. For in 1773, at least, the adventuress was willing, even anxious, to marry the bankrupt prince. To bring matters to a head she threatened to set out herself for Petersburg to procure the indispensable documents. More, to make a complete break with her past, she asked him to send away Schenck and Marine, who had now become his financial advisers and firmly established themselves in his household. He would not dismiss them and he would not

let her go. Afterwards she hinted that she was, in fact, formally contracted to his highness. And Countess of Limburg Styrum she might have lived and died had not Philip Ferdinand, out of regard for the proprieties, chosen to transport his beloved to the other side of the Rhine, to Oberstein, another of the plots of German ground which owned him for lord.¹

II

Not very many miles from Oberstein, in the pleasant vine-clad valleys of the Rhine and Neckar, were at this time dispersed many patriotic Poles, hoping and plotting for the restoration of their doomed country. To Mannheim often came their acknowledged leader, Prince Radziwill, the champion of Poland; a magnate, like Mazeppa's Palatine, "rich as a salt or silver mine," who was still wont on occasions to make use of barbaric pomp, and who was credited in popular imagination with having saved from the wreckage of his country's fortunes twelve statues of the Apostles cast in solid gold.

Among his most trusted agents was a young man, fervent and romantic, named Michael Domanski, formerly in the service of the Duke of Courland. Domanski was living at Mosbach on the Neckar, which a glance at the map shows to be on the high road from Franconia to Oberstein; but it was not till December, 1773, two months after our adventuress's installation at the latter place that she and he are said to have met, while both were paying a visit to Mannheim. The introduction may have been effected by the Pole's servant who had been in the service of the lady at Paris. But

¹ Even here, he only shared the sovereignty, which I suppose means the revenues, with the Elector of Treves.

particulars of this first meeting, if it was the first, are lacking.¹ Seeing the frail strange-eyed girl, the young patriot fell in love with her, as men apparently could not help doing. From that moment he put all other things aside and followed her to the end

The "new" castle of Oberstein, replacing the primitive fortress, was built in the twelfth century and burnt down in 1855. You may see its picturesque remains, backing against those of the older fabric, on the high porphyry cliff above the curious half-rock-built little town on the Nahe. From the high road a long path leads up to the ruins; and at the beginning of this path, about Christmastide, 1773, the courier used often to see, at nightfall, the figure of a man engaged in deep talk with a woman, darkly cloaked and hooded. The townsfolk jeered. They had no doubt that the woman was their count's fancy lady, from the *residenz*. As to her lover, for such he was rightly assumed to be, someone found out whence he came and dubbed him "The Stranger from Mosbach."

Philip Ferdinand was away at the time on a visit to his sister, the Princess of Hohenlohe-Bartenstein. "Do you know," his sister told him, "that your Persian mistress is no other than the daughter of the Empress Elizabeth of Russia? There appears to be no doubt about it."

Brother and sister were a credulous pair. Delighted and astonished, the Count writes off to "Betty," under date January 14th, 1774, apprizing her of his discovery. Now was made plain her cryptic talk about telling only a part of the truth; now one could understand why the Russians

¹ Information about this stage of the adventuress's career seems to be based mainly on the statements of her maid, Franziska, made to the Russian Tribunal.

would not forward her baptismal certificate. The rumour was rife that the Empress Elizabeth, who had died in 1762, was secretly married to Alexis Razumovski,¹ a Little Russian of very humble origin. True, the man (which perhaps they did not know) afterwards denied the marriage. But this might have been out of fear of Elizabeth's successors. For the like reason, the existence of a daughter might very well be kept a secret till she was of an age to assert her rights. In fact, it would be rather remarkable if so erotic a person as Peter the Great's daughter had not left any children.

The rumour spread—through the medium, one may guess, of Domanski. And as it spread, the poor princeling noted an increasing coldness in the attitude of his beloved. The time came when she denied herself to him. She waived all discussion of their much-talked-of marriage. And coupled with the rumour of her imperial degree came tittle-tattle from Oberstein about a mysterious lover. Philip Ferdinand took up the pen, and setting his teeth, one may suppose, entreated her to consult her own wishes first in everything. He would always be ready to stand aside. But he could not help adding, “If I did not fear to hurt you, I should acquaint you with a skit in a public print which can concern only you and the Stranger from Mosbach. The skit is humiliating and assigns you an object of tenderness unworthy of your rank. I sympathize with your frailty but I could never pardon you a common action especially after . . .² Regard me as a true friend. That title is all that I covet, since your hot blood has

¹ See the present writer's *Left-Handed Marriage of Royalty* (Hutchinson, 1927).

² It is not clear whether these lacunæ occur in the original or whether they represent passages undecipherable by the Russians or the German translator.

deprived me of a lover's. I am hot-blooded also but I'll be damned if I ever gave way to it since Betty left me or if I ever give way to it again."

We trace here an allusion to a previous amour with which "Betty" had cruelly twitted him. With a vow of chastity, the sovereign of Limburg Styrum thus renounces his suit. Who was he, a mere count of the Empire, penniless and bankrupt, to pretend to the hand of an empress's daughter—nay, was it of an empress herself? The grandchild of the great Peter must displace the German woman who loomed like a Colossus over Eastern Europe.

Another pretender to her throne was giving Catharine a good deal of trouble just then. This was Pugachev, who claimed to be her husband, Peter III. He had already inflicted severe defeats on the government troops and had an enormous following among the peasantry of the south-east. In addition, Catharine had a war with Turkey on her hands. By the Poles these embarrassments were eagerly watched. It may be imagined with what interest Prince Radziwill listened when his trusty Domanski poured into his ears the news of another pretender—of the existence close at hand of no less a person than the late empress's daughter and heiress.

If Pugachev was a thorn in the enemy's side, here might be a dagger-thrust in her heart. How much of the story Radziwill actually believed we have no means of knowing. He wrote in guarded but in most respectful terms to the lady at Oberstein, saluting her as "your highness" and proposing a secret meeting. This took place in an empty house at Zweibrücken. Having seen her, he decided to back her, because, of course, he had fallen under her spell, though no doubt he persuaded himself that he was but using her as an instrument of high politics.

At this early stage, however, the Palatine would not commit himself too deeply. Though, no doubt, it was upon his advice that the Princess determined to seek the countenance and support of the Turkish Sultan, it was to Philip Ferdinand that she turned for the expenses of the journey. He was ready to prove the sincerity of his protestations of friendship. Had he not said that she could always count upon him, in all things? She loved another man, she was going away for ever—these reflections could only have manifested to his countship the essential disinterestedness and generosity of his character. Or, it may be, that without any conscious desire to play the Galahad, he helped the girl because he loved her and could do no other. Sometimes, one guesses, he tried after the manner of middle-aged lovers to persuade himself that he was not a sentimental ass at all, and that in backing the claimant to the Russian throne, he was making a good business investment. In this delusion he would have been encouraged by old Marine, whatever that worldly-wise Parisian privately thought of the Circassian girl's development into the daughter of an empress.

The subjects of Limburg Styrum, we gather, had to supply the substance of their lord's generosity. Let us hope they paid up cheerfully, reflecting that they were speeding this costly foreign favourite on her way. The girl had always been at a loss how to describe herself. To get over that difficulty, her poor lover, as a parting gift, bestowed on her the title of Countess of Pinneberg or Pimberg, borrowed from an estate which he claimed but did not possess. Their last good-bye was said at Zweibrücken on May 13th, 1774. Very sadly, the Count must have watched the dust of her carriage wheels out of sight, and returned to his tumble-down schloss on the porphyry crag. Marine, he kept by

him—it must have been good to have someone to talk to, someone who had also, in a way, loved her. Letters he continued to write to and receive from her, for a while; then he passes altogether from our sight, this petty German prince, one of the few gallant gentlemen and unselfish lovers of whom sober history has any record.

Meanwhile, the Countess of Pinneberg's carriage rolled on towards the Alps. The dust brought on long paroxysms of coughing—had she noticed that she was getting thinner, that the spots were flaming redder in her cheeks? Merely a troublesome cold, she may have told herself, quickly to be got rid of in the warm airs of the Mediterranean. Or—was it precisely because she knew her days were numbered, that she so high-heartedly staked them against a great prize? The hopeful amorous temper of the consumptive was undoubtedly hers. At moments, she fancied herself already Empress of All the Russias. And her lover, the man with whom she had exchanged kisses at the foot of the castle steep, was with her—or would be with her at her journey's end.

We find them together at Venice, which Radziwill had appointed as their rendezvous. The Palatine had not been idle since their secret meeting. He had talked about her at the court of France, which was also at enmity with Russia, and secured for her the hospitality of the French Embassy. Within a day or two, all eyes were turned upon the mysterious, fascinating stranger, who walked daily on the Piazza, attended by the great Polish noble and his retinue. The description, "Countess of Pinneberg," concealed her identity no more effectively than mask and domino concealed her charming person. It was an open secret that she was the daughter of the late Empress Elizabeth, a serious rival to the mighty

Catharine. Venetian magnificos, French cavaliers, the distinguished travellers for whom Venice was a lodestone, flocked round the delightful incognita, hats under their arms, paying her their court, bowing low to kiss her too-thin hand. Most remarkable in the throng was Edward Wortley Montagu, the highly eccentric and greatly adventurous son of a brilliant, daring mother. Well acquainted with the East, living here on the lagoons in Turkish fashion, he promised to be a useful henchman to the adventuress. For practical reasons, also, she accepted the homage of two very odd admirers—Hassan and Hamet, respectable Barbary corsairs.

Our Princess, we suspect, was in no hurry to quit the pleasant purlieus of St. Mark's. She was liberally supplied with money—at this moment—by her Polish and German princes. And beneath the hood of a gondola one could be loved as discreetly as below the castled crag of Oberstein. But Radziwill's agents told him to make haste. The Turks were losing heart. The time to declare herself had come, he warned the girl. So in the barque of the handy Hamet, the party was transported across the Adriatic to Ragusa, at the very door of the Ottoman Empire. It was upon her departure from Venice that the Countess of Pinneberg (the only name, by the way, to which our heroine had an incontestable right) described herself for the first time as Empress of Russia—Elizabeth II.

By this time the news of her pretensions had been brought to the ears of the person most threatened by them. Catharine was furious. It is certainly most significant that she should have paid such heed to a rival at first sight so contemptible. A young woman of unknown or doubtful antecedents, supported by a single malcontent Polish noble, without a soldier in her pay, hovering many days' journey from the

nearest confines of Russia—why should she excite anything more in the Autocrat than a scornful smile? Her money would probably be exhausted before she dared to present herself at the frontier. Did His Majesty of Great Britain sleep any the less soundly o' nights because the Count of Albany, that indubitable heir by divine right to his three crowns, paraded ceaselessly about Italy? But to Catharine, who had been at such pains to extract from Razumovski the truth about his alleged marriage, this self-styled daughter of his loomed a most formidable spectre. At that time she had a fleet in the Mediterranean, commanded by Alexis Orlov, the victor of Chesme. To him she sent orders to seize the person of the impostor at all costs, even if he had to persuade the neutral republic of Ragusa by a bombardment to give her up. To suppress this puny claimant to her crown, Catharine thought it would be worth while to violate international law and to outrage the conscience of Europe.

Hard upon these orders from Petersburg, there came to the Admiral letters from the girl-pretender herself, informing him of her accession to her mother's throne under the title of Elizabeth II. To remove his doubts, she enclosed among other documents, a copy of the will of Elizabeth I, acknowledging her as her daughter and heiress, and laying down rules for the governance of her Empire. The actual letters and papers received by Orlov have disappeared. The copies produced before the Russian tribunal were in the adventuress's handwriting, but the originals must have been drafted by someone well acquainted with Russian state affairs. If not Radziwill, then Domanski or another of the Poles must have been the author.

Orlov, it is said, read these astounding communications with some alarm. His brother, sometime Catharine's

paramour, had lately fallen out of favour. He smelt a trap set for his loyalty. Very soon, however, his spies informed him that there was an “Elizabeth II” holding her court at Ragusa—the woman referred to by the Empress. But before the fleet, then off Leghorn, could be got under sail, the bird had flown.

And with ruffled plumage. Accommodated, upon her arrival at the Dalmatian port, in the villa of the French consul, Descriveaux, on the road to Gravosa, the Countess of Pinneberg had conducted herself at the beginning with the decorum which becomes a sovereign. At the dictation, no doubt, of Radziwill, she had despatched letters to the Turkish Sultan, informing him of her just claims to the throne of Russia and praying for his support. The account of herself that she gave in the letter dated August 24th, 1774, and in another dated December 21st¹, was that upon the death of her august mother she was transported to Siberia (presumably for her safety); thence she was delivered by a priest, who conveyed her to the country of the Don Cossacks; an attempt having been made by a governess to poison her, she took refuge in Persia with her father’s brother. To Pugachev she referred as Prince Razumovski—unaware, seemingly, that the bold adventurer claimed to be Elizabeth I’s nephew, Peter III.

While awaiting the Padishah’s reply, the Countess (for she was at least that) found time to write to Philip Ferdinand. Her letter was not, I suppose, very welcome to him, since she hints at her approaching marriage with one “who, though not noble, possesses qualities which would adorn any station,” and goes on to solicit for him some title or order of nobility from the fountain of honour. In July she had already told her old friend that Radziwill’s manner towards her had

¹ Addressed to Sir Wm. Hamilton from Rome,

become much colder. This letter seems to have crossed one from Marine—"there have been visitors at Oberstein, among them the lively Count de Bussy, who have entertained the prince with an account of her gay doings. But there will always be a warm welcome to her if ever she returns to the schloss."

Passionate adventures should have been expected from the daughter of Elizabeth I. At this time she was certainly in love with Domanski. Unluckily, a *garde champêtre* had noticed a man lurking furtively in the neighbourhood of her villa, and perceiving him, one night, to be climbing over the wall, fired and winged him. The wounded man was found to be Domanski. His injuries were slight; not so the damage done to his mistress's reputation. It may have been then or before that Radziwill's manner became chilly. He may have been shocked or jealous—but was entitled to rejoice over the discovery as an excuse to throw over the pretender.

For her chances were almost gone. Sultan Mustafa was dead; his successor, the peaceable Abd-ul-Hamid I, made haste to come to terms with Russia. Pugachev's head had rolled into the basket at Moscow. The principalities and powers had no more use for this particular pawn. Radziwill began to think of making his own peace with the Empress.

One day, the girl-pretender found he had gone. She might have returned to Germany. But there were other courts where a claimant to the Russian throne might be welcome. She took counsel for once with her faithful few—Domanski (whom she no longer thought of marrying), another Pole named Jan Czarnomski, and a priest named Chanecki, lately a member of the Jesuit body which had been suppressed in the previous year. Probably at the cleric's advice, she decided to proceed to Rome. Funds were lacking. Through the good

offices of Montagu, however, she obtained a further small credit from a Venetian banker called Martinelli, and also a letter of introduction to Sir William Hamilton, the British Minister at the Court of the Two Sicilies. On October 30th, the brave little party landed from Hassan's *felucca* at Barletta, and journeyed to Naples.

His association, later on, with another beautiful adventuress seems to have driven all memory of the Russian Princess out of Hamilton's head. At any rate, he has left us no record or impressions of her. Both by him and his (first) wife, she seems to have been kindly received. When her money was exhausted, he helped her and procured her and her party a passport for Rome.

There they arrived on December 6th. The moment was ill chosen. Clement XIV was dead and everybody's attention fixed upon the election of his successor. The ex-Jesuit bestirred himself and got in touch with Monsignor Roccatani, Chaplain to Cardinal Albani. The churchman was presented to her Imperial Highness in a dismal lodging in the Via della Longara, in the Trastevere quarter. Bred in the schismatic church, she was above all things, he learnt, anxious to bring Russia back within the fold of the Universal Church. The monsignor retired, visibly impressed, and reported favourably upon her. She offered to show the original will of her august mother to the Cardinals. Ecclesiastics came and went discreetly, but they forgot to bring any money with them. That Christmas, "Elizabeth II" lay on her bed, coughing, starving, while the red spots on her cheeks flamed brighter than ever. In vain she tried to sell decorations and patents of nobility. She had not a penny—lived on what her two adoring Poles and her servants could filch or beg for her.

And then—surely this was a miracle!—a stranger who

had been for some time watching her door, was introduced. Saluting her with extreme deference, he announced himself as Captain Kristeneck, of the Russian service. He brought with him a message from Orlov—the answer which the girl had never, probably, expected to receive. The Admiral's brother was in disgrace—the Admiral himself was deeply offended at his treatment by the Empress. He awaited her Imperial Highness at Pisa. And to defray her expenses, Jenkins, an English banker in Rome, had been instructed by the Admiral's friend, Sir John Dick, British Consul at Leghorn, to open a credit for her.

“Don't trust him,” cried the Poles. Domanski spied the snare. But the feel of the broad gold pieces, the friendly ordinary chat in the English banker's parlour, removed the desperate girl's last doubts. Besides, as her followers and servants, who loved her, notwithstanding, afterwards testified, she usually kept her own counsel, and was used to command rather than to consult. A few days later, accompanied by her grimly doubtful esquires, “Elizabeth II” drove away through the Porta del Popolo, smiling and showering largess on the crowd.

III

Orlov, on learning that the pretender had left Ragusa, was at a loss how to execute his dread mistress's commands. His glee may, therefore, be imagined when he received a note from Hamilton, informing him that a lady claiming to be the daughter of the late Empress had been at Naples and was now in Rome. At that time relations between England and Russia were sympathetic, but I do not think it was the English envoy's intention to betray the girl who had lately

been his guest. That would be inconsistent with Sir William's known good nature. She must have seemed to him, in any case, safe from capture or violence here in the Italian states.

It is not so easy to clear another British representative from complicity in the dirty business that followed. Under date January 16th, 1775, in a letter to Catharine from Pisa, the Russian admiral indicates the consul at Leghorn as his tool or accomplice: "I immediately instructed Dick to write to reliable people of his acquaintance in Rome, that they would induce her to come here, when I would help her." Jenkins, the banker at Rome, would certainly not have been in the plot.

Travelling under the name of the Countess Silinski, the doomed adventuress reached Pisa on February 15th. Orlov, a universal lover and a skilled courtier, had no difficulty in managing her. He lodged her in his palazzo, listened to her statements, promised her the help of his fleet, gravely, no doubt, discussed plans for setting her on the throne of her ancestors. She proposed to sail on one of his ships to Constantinople. It is very unlikely, opines our leading authority,¹ that she was really prepared to carry out these ambitious projects. Her aim, he thinks, was to enmesh the admiral, to extract money from him, to play the *grande dame*, and then at a convenient moment to abscond. Orlov must have seemed to lend himself to such a design. He at once discovered more than a partisan's attachment, and humbly solicited the honour of her hand. She replied that it was too early to think of that, but that when she came into her kingdom he would not find her ungrateful. "And I would have married her," writes the contemptible courtier to the

¹ Brevern, the compiler of the Russian state papers.

Empress, "if by no other means I could have executed your Majesty's behests." The true note of royalist devotion!

Meantime, it seems likely that his dupe was persuaded to become his mistress. He sent away Mme. Demidov, the lady with whom he had been so far associated, and was constantly seen with the stranger at the opera and "on the promenade"—wherever that may be in forlorn, rain-drenched Pisa. The girl's subsequent references to him give grounds for suspecting that she cared somewhat for the man. He appeared to her flushed with victory, as a British admiral appeared to another woman at Naples a few years later; for he had taken the credit of the defeat of the Turkish fleet at Chesme, which rightly belonged to his lieutenant, the Scotsman Greig. And at all times "the Princess's" passions seem to have been readily enkindled.

Under the jealous suspicious eyes of the Poles, the comedy was played for nine days. These Russian officers evidently took a real delight in fooling the woman whom they were sending to her doom. Kristeneck humbly solicited her influence to secure him a step in rank. Finally, it was proposed that her highness should visit the squadron and witness its manoeuvres. As the trip meant staying the night at Leghorn, her two servants, together with her esquires, were of the party. Next day, the lady dined with Orlov at the British consulate. In the afternoon they rowed out to the flagship—*The Three Hierarchs*—where Rear-Admiral Greig received them with all possible honour. The guns of the fleet thundered a welcome. It must have seemed to the dazzled adventuress that her wildest dreams were coming true. Refreshments were served to the distinguished visitors, and the evolutions of the ships began. The woman became so absorbed in the spectacle that she did

not notice that both Orlov and Greig had disappeared. All at once she and her remaining companions perceived themselves to be encircled by a cordon of Marines. An officer, Captain Litvinov, informed her that they were prisoners. Domanski and Czarnomski whipped out their blades, which were as quickly knocked out of their hands. The "Princess" shrieked for Orlov. She was told that he was out of earshot and himself under arrest. Protesting, she was locked up in the captain's cabin, her maid, Franziska, and an Italian manservant being allowed to attend her. Her two Poles were also closely confined—most probably on another vessel.

The girl's bitterest sensation at this dramatic moment, one imagines, must have been mortification—exasperation with herself for having deliberately walked into the trap. From the portholes she could see the friendly, safe shores of Italy—ships went by, aboard any one of which she could have dared the Russian power to pursue her. And she had been so mad as to transport herself from the safe soil of Tuscany onto this floating bit of Russia—as much a piece of the dread Catharine's domain as the suburbs of Moscow. We do not hear that in this hour of her undoing she raved or swooned. With queenly wrath she wrote to Greig, demanding an explanation of this violation of Tuscan neutrality and outrage upon herself. He simply replied that he was acting under the orders of his superiors. To Orlov she wrote reproaching him for having betrayed and abandoned her. A pretence was made by a midshipman of smuggling through this letter. The admiral answered that he, too, was under arrest, that she must have confidence in him, and that he would certainly save her; his old shipmate Greig, he concluded, would surely contrive the escape of both. At that moment the

scoundrel was ransacking his victim's papers at Pisa, and arranging to kidnap her remaining servants.

Technically, I suppose, the deck of the Russian warship, even in neutral waters, was Russian territory. Some years ago it was rumoured that a seaman serving on another Russian warship, visiting Portsmouth, was executed on board, but the ship had first been taken outside the three mile limit. One recalls the not altogether dissimilar case of the kidnapping of Sun Yat Sen inside the Chinese Legation in Portland Place. In the eighteenth century several outrages of the kind are recorded, among others the seizure of Count Benyowski in distinctly funny circumstances. It is generally asserted that the government of the Great Duke of Tuscany protested strongly against what had been done by Catharine's agents ; but I can find no mention of the protest or of the episode itself in the letters of Sir Horace Mann, our envoy at Florence at this time. Everybody not in the secret who had seen the mysterious " Countess Silinski " at Pisa, took her to be the Russian admiral's mistress. Her disappearance, or even removal to one of his ships would, therefore, call for no suspicion or remark. That Dick was in the plot seems pretty clear from Orlov's own letters and from the rewards known to have been conferred on him by the Empress. In a life of Catharine by one Castera, published soon after her death, the Consul and his wife were charged before the world with having aided and abetted the Russian, but he took no steps to vindicate himself. Questioned by Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, who was with him at a dinner party in Berkeley Square years after, in 1799, Sir John repudiated all complicity in the business. " One morning," he said " about eleven o'clock, a Cossack who was in Orlov's service, and who acted as his courier, arrived at my door, charged

with a message, to inform me that his master with some company, in three carriages, meant to dine with me that day. I accordingly ordered a dinner to be prepared for his reception. When he arrived he brought with him a lady whom he introduced to my wife and to myself; but he never mentioned her name, calling her only *Questa dama*. She was by no means handsome, though genteel in her figure, and had the air of a person who had suffered in her health. There was something mysterious about her which excited my curiosity, but which I could not penetrate. Considering her attentively, it struck me that I had seen her before and in England. Being determined, if possible, to satisfy myself on this point, as we stood leaning against the chimney-piece in my drawing-room, before dinner, I said to her: 'I believe, ma'am, you speak English.' 'I speak only one little,' answered she. We sat down to dine, and after the repast Alexis Orlov proposed to my wife and to another lady who was there present, to accompany him and the female stranger aboard his ship. They both declining, Alexis Orlov took her with him in the evening. The boom or chain was then stretched across the harbour, but a boat came from the Russian admiral's ship, into which he put the lady and accompanied her himself safe on board.

"On the ensuing morning, when Orlov came on shore, he proceeded to my house. His eye was violently inflamed, and his whole countenance betrayed much agitation. Without explaining to me the cause or reason of this disorder, he said that he had passed a most unpleasant night; and he requested me to let him have some of the most diverting books in my library, in order to divert the lady who was on board his ship. I never saw her again."

Sir John Dick's version of the incident, it will have been

noticed, does not differ materially from that supplied by the captives themselves. Sir Nathaniel hints that it did not carry much conviction to his own mind. It is satisfactory, at least, to believe that the villain of the piece suffered something like remorse for having betrayed the girl in whose arms, it is quite likely, he had slept. He permits himself a sneering chuckle about his conquest in a letter to the Empress : “ She reminds me of my erstwhile bride, the Schmitt—I can now boast of having had some fine brides ! ”

Yet she continued for a long time to believe in him. On February 24th, the Russian squadron got under sail for the Baltic. Greig, too good a man for the job, declared this duty the most painful he had ever performed. When the vessel entered the port of Southampton his prisoner asked if there was a letter for her from Orlov. On hearing that there was none, she rushed on deck and tried to throw herself into an English boat that was passing. She was dragged below, and someone told her that Orlov was still at Leghorn. She swooned, and reviving, at last abandoned herself to despair.

She reached the capital she had perhaps dreamed of entering as sovereign on May 11th, 1775. The same night she was taken by an escort of the Preobrajenski Guards and lodged in the fortress of St. Peter and Paul. As during the voyage, she was at first allowed to keep her maidservant. Prince Galitzin, Catharine’s chancellor, came, attended by the Procurator, Ushakov, to examine her. They were confronted not by a cowering captive but by a queenly young woman who angrily demanded by what right she had been seized and detained. Galitzin spoke her fair, engaged her in conversation, and sent in a preliminary report to the Empress. He was shocked by her appearance—it seemed to him that she was

already under sentence of death, an opinion soon afterwards confirmed by the medical men.

For this very reason Catharine was the more anxious to get at the truth about this daring impostor. Franziska and the other servant were interrogated. They avowed their attachment to their mistress, but agreed that she was most reticent. They knew nothing of her schemes. All they could talk about, apparently, was her life at Neuses and Oberstein. Now came the turn of the two Poles. Czarnomski stated that he had heard the accused spoken of by Radziwill and others as a Russian princess. He had met her at Venice, had lent her money, and had then attached himself to her, partly in the hope of getting his money back, partly moved by the spirit of adventure. Domanski's evidence, the commissioners quickly perceived, was dictated by a desire to shield the adventuress. He, too, had been presented to her at Venice by Radziwill, who told him that she was the daughter of Elizabeth and Razumovski; the Prince had heard this himself from a correspondent in Germany.

We know, in fact, that the rumour started immediately after the pretender's first meetings with the Stranger from Mosbach; but the young man was discreetly silent about his earlier acquaintance with his mistress. The high-hearted girl had not thought of betraying any of her confederates or of lessening her own importance. Still, she naturally tried to clear herself of the charge of treason against the Empress. Submitting at last to interrogation, she declared that she was affianced to the Prince of Limburg and was proceeding to Persia, solely in order to realize her wealth and collect her dowry, when she stopped at Venice. There, while waiting for a ship, she became acquainted with Radziwill. Finally, by some unknown person, a packet was placed in her hand.

It proved to contain documents making out that she was the daughter of the late Empress. These documents corresponded with vague talk she had heard in her childhood. As directed by the mysterious sender, she despatched copies to Orlov—only, as she now asserted, for his information.

The prisoner's statements were forwarded to her Imperial Majesty at Moscow. They were found most unsatisfactory. Catharine cared not a rap whether a charge of high treason could be supported or not. If ground for that were wanted, there was always the copy of the appeal addressed to the Sultan, found together with so many other incriminating documents in the house at Pisa. No; the wretched girl must be made to confess that she was not the daughter of Elizabeth Petrovna. That was the real, the only purpose of the enquiry, as the Empress seems pretty smartly to have reminded her officials. From Moscow she sent twenty arguments to confound the impostor's assertions. We are not told whether they were successful. Trusting rather to intimidation, the commissioners deprived the girl of her servants, and despite her failing health treated her with much more rigour. She asked for an audience of the Empress, hinting that she had important matters to reveal. "*Voilà une fieffée canaille,*" screamed Her Majesty. "Tell her that she can hope for no alleviation of her lot till she makes a complete confession." We know who she is, added the Autocrat—the daughter of an innkeeper at Prague.

This allegation stung the dying girl into giving a more detailed account of herself. Her story is certainly a strange one. Her earliest recollections, she said, were of Kiel, in Holstein, where she was brought up by a Frenchwoman named Peret, or Peran. She was baptized in the Russian, or Orthodox church. When she was nine years old, a woman

named Catharine and three men, whose names she did not remember, conveyed her across Russia, telling her that they were taking her to her parents at Moscow. Instead, she was taken to Bagdad, where she was taken charge of by a merchant named Hamed. Later on she was adopted by a Persian prince named Hali, and taken to Ispahan. By her new protector she was treated with much respect, and told that she was the daughter of the Empress Elizabeth. She lived at the Persian capital till 1769. Dressed as a boy, she then accompanied her protector to Astrakhan, traversed Russia, and stopped a single night in Petersburg. In London, the Persian unaccountably disappeared, leaving her a quantity of gold and jewellery. On the proceeds of these she had lived till she reached Venice. The secret of her birth, she added, was probably known to George Keith, the governor of Neuchâtel,¹ whom she had visited at that place in early childhood.

Naturally, this reaffirmation of her imperial descent only infuriated the Empress the more. Galitzin, who seems to have been touched by his captive's rapid decline, had detected Domanski's love for her, and now hinted to the young man that a full and frank confession of the imposture might be rewarded by the imperial clemency. The Pole and the dying woman were brought face to face. At the sight of the awful change in her, he fell on his knees, weeping, and implored her to confess—confess!—that they might be suffered to live out their few remaining days together in some corner. The girl pushed him away with a disdainful smile. "The man is mad," she told Galitzin. "You have heard the truth about me."

She never again saw the man who would have laid down

¹ George Keith, Earl Marischal, a field-marshal in the Prussian Service. He was Governor of Neuchâtel, 1752-1762.

his life for her. And, after all, why should she haul down her colours now? She had nothing to gain and nothing to lose on earth. The physicians warned Catharine that the end was very near. Some slight alleviation was granted. She asked for a priest who could speak French or German. One was sent. At once he began to bother her with questions. She checked him. Alexis Orlov she forgave, speaking of him with a touch even of tenderness. Again, the priest, primed by the Empress, returned to the charge. "Say the prayers for the dying," came the choking adjuration, "There is nothing else for you to do here." And on December 4th, 1775, she died.

She was buried by night in the moat of the fortress by soldiers sworn to secrecy. Domanski, Czarnomski, and her humbler retainers were put across the frontier, sternly warned that their lives would be forfeited if they ever again ventured on Russian soil. They were even given a few roubles each, to provide for their further journey. Catharine, like our Charles II, "was not cruel or bloody." Remorseless in self-defence, she took no pleasure in vengeance for its own sake. The dead pretender's confederates might have fared worse in some western countries.

What became of Domanski, one wonders—how and when was the news of his Betty's death received by the poor German prince, who had spent almost his last thaler in speeding her on her deathward course? Perhaps he never knew positively what had become of her till the publication of Castera's history on the death of Catharine. Therein the legend was set going that she was done to death by the waters of the Neva being slowly admitted to her cell.¹

¹ A legend popularized by a picture by Flavinski, exhibited at Petersburg in 1864.

And now the final question presents itself—Who was this delicate exotic girl who claimed to be the heiress of the Russias ?

Sir John Dick, at the dinner party referred to above, told Nathaniel Wraxall that she was the daughter of a baker of Nuremberg, in Franconia, and had been a woman of pleasure in London. "If on this point," added the knight, "my testimony should seem to you doubtful and suspicious, the present Margrave of Anspach, who is in this country and who knew her, is ready to testify to the same fact." Wraxall does not seem to have troubled the Margrave, or indeed to have placed any more faith in the testimony than is at any time due to the exclusive information so extensively revealed by elderly gentlemen in West End clubs and at West End dinner tables. And Sir John was as wide of the mark as most of these gossips. He did not know that the adventuress had lived for several months as the guest of Limburg Styrum, at Neuses, which is only a score of miles from Nuremberg, and had gone about the country with him. It is hardly likely that she would have exposed herself to such imminent risk of recognition, or that she could have escaped identification with the apparently notorious baker's daughter.

Wraxall and many other of her contemporaries were inclined to credit her own story of her birth. It looks as though Catharine herself thought there might be something in it. It is pointed out that she avoided making the enquiries proposed by the pretender herself,¹ as though she dreaded finding out too much. Moreover, though ignoring the claims addressed to her for the damages done to French shipping by unauthorized Russian privateers, she promptly settled a claim for debts contracted in France and Italy by the alleged

¹ George Keith was living in Berlin till 1778.

Princess. She was, in short, obviously anxious to hush the matter up.

As already said, the Empress Elizabeth's whole manner of life went far to make the pretension plausible. Against this, the historian Waliszewski pleads that the Empress, who made no secret of her gallantries, would never have hesitated to recognize her children, if she had had any; and he claims as much for her husband, Razumovski, notorious for his devotion to his brothers, nephews, and nieces. (It is by a confusion, it may here be interpolated, with one of the latter named Daragane, that our unfortunate adventuress came by the description Tarakanova, which she never heard of.)

Waliszewski's contentions carry weight as far as they go; but he forgets to mention the lascivious Empress's notorious jealousy and its possible consequences. He and all other historians miss the significance of an incident transcribed from the Russian archives by Alexander Vasil'chikov, in his history of the Razumovski family, and related by Waliszewski himself. In the reign of the Empress Elizabeth, a woman named Nikoneva, the refractory serf of one Bachmanov, was undergoing perpetual imprisonment in the convent of Tikhvin. In the year 1753 she craved an audience of the Empress or of Count Shuvalov. This being refused, she made a statement that a woman named Lukheria Mikhaelovna, an inmate of the same convent, had told her that she (Lukheria) was the daughter of the Shah of Persia and the wife of Razumovski, by whom she had had a child. Nikoneva had seen letters from the favourite to this woman, full of tender expressions. "The alleged wife went unpunished, being simply confined as before in the convent of Tikhvin; whereas Nikoneva, who had denounced her, was knouted and relegated to another convent."

Daughter of the Shah of Persia?—wife of Razumovski? Does not this recall the girl pretender's persistent allusions to her Persian uncle, to her Persian connections? There is certainly nothing improbable in the story told to the serf. Razumovski may well have had a child by a Persian woman (not impossibly without his knowledge), and that child may have been smuggled out of the country to save it or its parents from the jealous ire of the Empress. The year 1753 would have been some four or five years after the adventuress's birth. And Lukheria, you note, was not punished—only kept out of the way.

This theory of her origin squares with our poor heroine's last account of herself. From daughter of the Empress's husband to the Empress's own daughter is an easy step in credulity. She had heard odd whispers about her parentage in her childhood. Domanski testified that he first heard the rumour of the Empress's marriage to Razumovski in the year 1769. He may easily have mentioned this to his mistress at Oberstein, and so supplied her, as she would be eager to believe, with the key to the mystery of her origin. The flame of her imagination would have been fanned by Radziwill, and those spurious documents, I see no reason to doubt, slipped into her hands by his orders. For all the confederates were dupes of each other and of their own desires. "After all, I may be the rightful heiress—let them think so," the adventuress would have said; and they: "After all, she may be Elizabeth's daughter; anyway, it is to the advantage of Poland to presume she is."

Whether or not she had ever visited Persia, it is noteworthy that the name of that out-of-the-way country is on her lips from the moment we are first introduced to her. Her course, we note, is always eastward: in her last letter to Hamilton,

she asks for a passport with a view to getting to Constantinople, an unfavourable arena for a mere female adventuress. It may be true that she would have been content to play the uncrowned queen to the end, and never seriously contemplated asserting her pretensions by force. At Ragusa she meditated a marriage with Domanski, which would assuredly have diminished her chances of mounting the Russian throne. Unwittingly, she ventured too far into the toils—and was lost. Is it her princeling in his mouldy castle, or some starveling Pole in Paris, whom we seem to hear moaning, in the dreary after years : “ Would I were with her, wheresome’er she is, either in heaven or in hell ? ”¹

¹ Before judging this luckless adventuress, we must bear in mind that all our information is derived from unfriendly sources. The Russian enquiry does not appear to have been unfairly conducted, but the fact remains that the papers on which we have to rely constitute the case for the prosecution.

THE FIRE-HEARTED DEMOISELLE

I

IN the pages of Carlyle, "the brown-haired, light behaved, fire-hearted Demoiselle Théroigne" is paraded before us as the very genius of the Revolution. "With haughty eyes and serene fair countenance," she recalls "to some the idea of Pallas Athene." In "her grenadier bonnet, short-skirted riding habit," with pistols in belt and sabre in baldric, she is descried riding the revolutionary storm, urging on "whole steel battalions" to fire and fury. This picture is at least truer to life than that drawn by the woman's royalist enemies. To them she seems to have been peculiarly obnoxious, acting upon them as the proverbial red rag reacts upon the bull. And to them she owes much of her fame. She had good enemies, remarks a French biographer. Stripped of all the inventions of their malice, she remains a vivid, and to my mind, sympathetic figure. While in pursuit of the selfish ends of the adventuress, perhaps of the courtesan, she was caught in the whirl of great events. She became enamoured of liberty as she had never been enamoured of a man. And, in the end, the revolutionary car, before which she had strewn flowers, overtook her, rolled her in the mud, and obliterated her.

Hers was an odd personality, and there was something odd about her looks—that is, if the portrait in the Musée Carnavalet is indeed hers, as Georges Cain took it to be. She is not

in the least like Pallas Athene, nor yet like a Mænad, though a Bacchante in a chastened mood might have worn such an expression.

Only people, rhetorically minded, who had never seen her, described her as beautiful. But there is a general agreement that she was pretty. Lacour, her most trustworthy biographer, has been at great pains to collect all opinions about her person. Beaulieu said she was a "jeune personne, *assez gentille*." Restif de la Bretonne admits that this Republican had a waist which you could span with your ten fingers. Georges Duval, another royalist, who may have seen her in his youth, says : "If her features were not exactly those of the Venus of Praxiteles, she had at least a dainty puckered little face, a 'cute' air which went with it delightfully, and one of those retroussé noses that have changed the face of empires." *Petite* she was in the French sense only. An English observer found her a little above the average woman in her height, which Lacour estimates at one and a half metre. A more detailed description of her than anybody's is given by an unfriendly witness, Baudot : "I often saw Mlle. Théroigne de Méricourt at the gatherings round the Tuileries. She spoke with more confidence than eloquence. She was nearly always dressed in a riding suit ; her cloth costume was very commonplace, of dark green. She wore a hat with a black plume. It is quite untrue to say that her dress was fantastic or elegant. She was *petite*, rather neat in the waist, with an average face without any remarkable features or any particular blemish. Her complexion was the colour of a reddening pear, due no doubt to her continual outdoor occupations ; generally speaking, she was on the good-looking side, though without charm. She was far from practising the cleanliness which is the special virtue of the



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(Musée Carnavalet)

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professional coquette—no doubt, this was from policy, but she pushed it too far.”

The spiteful conclusion enhances the value of this unfriendly critic's stingy meed of praise. Indeed, one might be almost tempted to suppose that he is speaking of a real beauty, after all. But we shall catch other glimpses of her at different stages of her course, as seen by more impartial witnesses. Meantime, in the Carnavalet face, I find something queerly attractive—something not quite human, the face of a seer.

“Better [Carlyle apostrophizes her] hadst thou staid in native Luxemburg, and been the mother of some brave man's children. . . .” Perhaps; but she had mighty little encouragement to remain there. Her birth certificate has been found—to the profound relief of French historians who, like other Frenchmen, attach enormous value to such documents. She was, in fact, a Walloon, born in Luxemburg, then part of the Austrian Netherlands, on August 13th, 1762. From her birthplace, the village of Marcourt, is derived the inaccurate and unnecessary addition of de Méricourt to her surname. Her father, Pierre, a well-to-do peasant, spelt his name sometimes Théroigne, sometimes Terwagne. Anne-Josèphe, as his daughter was named in baptism, was followed by two boys, Pierre and Joseph, born respectively in 1764 and 1767. In December, 1767, their mother died. The father, meanwhile, had lost a good deal of money by unfortunate speculations. At this point we let Anne-Josèphe herself take up the story.

“When my mother died, my brothers and I were still young. An aunt at Liège took charge of me. She placed me in a convent, where I learnt to sew. There I made my first communion. A year passed, and my aunt married. Disinclined to pay my fees at the convent, she had me back to look after

her children ; but her harsh treatment forced me to return to my father, who had married again in the meantime.

“ My stepmother treated me no better than my aunt at Liège. My brothers and I were forced to leave our home. The elder went to Germany, to stay with relations named Campinado. I and my younger brother went to Xhoris, in the Stavelot district, to the relations of my father, peasant proprietors, who are still living. My brother was quite a child, and I was thirteen.

“ I was put to work too hard for my years. But that I did not mind so much. I suffered much more from slights. When I could no longer endure these, I returned to Liège, to my aunt's. I was worse off than ever. She treated me in just the same way as before.

“ In the end, her unkindness obliged me to run away again. My aunt kept all my things to constrain me to remain with her. I left everything behind and went to Sougné, in the province of Limburg, where I stayed a year, tending kine.”

This account of earliest years is contained in Théroigne's *Confessions*, published in French, the author or editor being a M. Strobl-Ravelsberg. This book has quite the appearance of a work of fiction. The surprise of M. Lacour may, therefore, be imagined when he was informed by the Keeper of the Imperial Archives at Vienna that it was practically the transcript of the evidence given by Théroigne before the Austrian commissioners at a certain stage in her career, the originals being still in official custody. It is certainly strange that Strobl-Ravelsberg omitted to apprise his readers of the strictly authentic character of his important work.

From Limburg, Théroigne returned to Liège, where she got a situation, first as sempstress, then as a nursemaid. Losing this latter job, she went back to her relations at

Xhoris. A strange lady passing in a carriage took a fancy to her and took her to Antwerp. Here, the poor forest-bred girl found herself abandoned. At the critical moment, she tells us, an Englishwoman happened along and took her under her protection. This woman, who bore the un-English name of Colbert, discovered in her protégée some talent, or at any rate, liking for music, and took her to London to have her trained for the concert stage.

At this time Théroigne told her Austrian examiner she was in her twentieth year. Four years had been passed at Antwerp. One would give much to know what really happened to her in England. The pretty Walloon's own account is quite in the Richardsonian vein. While under her protectress's roof she received frequent visits from a young English gentleman—oh, so much the gentleman! High-born, rich, cultured, handsome of face, elegant of manner and attire, animated by the noblest sentiments. Presently, Théroigne became aware of a something in his glance, of a warm pressure of his fingers. Chloe-like, she would have fled. Alas! “milord” surprised her when alone, went down on his knees, and said “Fly with me.” Away they went, without, apparently, a word of thanks to poor Mrs. Colbert. The noble young Englishman conveyed his charmer to his country seat, somewhere near London. In the excitement of the flight he had forgotten to say anything about marriage. When diffidently reminded of this by Théroigne, he explained that he was still under age and would lose his fortune if he married without his trustee's consent—which he was not likely to obtain. The Belgian girl, being, after all, no Pamela, thought it would be a pity if he lost his money, so the question of marriage was postponed. When the young man attained his majority and entered into possession of his

patrimony, he saw no harm in adjourning the marriage still further. By way of consolation, presumably, he took his mistress to Paris, where, to use a vulgarism, they had a high old time. Anne-Josèphe observed with dismay that her beloved was falling into dissolute courses. At this time he gave her two hundred thousand livres (roughly, £3950 of our money), whether in an excess of prodigality, whether prompted by her in a natural solicitude for her future, is not stated. Perhaps it was well for him he did so ; for when he found himself stranded she gave him back forty thousand livres (about £1580), which enabled them to get back to England. Arrived there, he persisted in his evil courses. Théroigne abandoned all thoughts of marrying him, and in 1787 crossed over once more to Paris.

This story makes no undue strain on our credulity, but it was speedily challenged by an *émigré*, named Mengin-Salabert. He claimed to know that the girl, while in service at Liège, became the concubine of her employer, an advocate ; and that it was later on, while singing as she washed linen in the Meuse, that she captivated her Englishman, who took her to Spa and London and had her trained for the concert stage. Blanc, the Austrian commissioner, seems to have attached little importance to Mengin-Salabert's evidence, which had certainly no bearing on the case. It sounds to me, however, on the whole, more credible than Théroigne's own version. That a good-looking unprotected girl in that age and country should thus early lose her technical virtue is in the highest degree probable.

In other respects, Anne-Josèphe's story at this point is unconvincing. She does not tell us where she lived in London, or where outside of it, with her gallant. Nor, what became of the excellent Mrs. Colbert. Lacour remarks she may very

well have spent more than four years in England. I am as little disposed to credit this as the supposition that she married an Englishman because she signed herself "*Théroigne Spinster*" on one or two occasions. Questioned about this, "The prisoner stammered some words. They had not the ring of truth. Blanc, therefore, resolved to penetrate the little mystery hidden under her reply, which he regarded as unsatisfactory." The commissioner did not think of looking for the key to the riddle in an English-German dictionary.

He was supplied with two receipted doctor's bills from Paris, for attendance upon Françoise Louise, daughter of the Demoiselle Théroigne, who died in infancy, in April, 1788. The little girl may have been the child of the Englishman aforesaid. She is never, at all events, referred to in the letters of the Marquis de Persan, who figures at this stage as the mother's lover and protector. The elderly Marquis, according to the *Confessions*, insinuated himself into the acquaintance of the Englishman's mistress, merely as a friend and adviser, on the occasion of her first visit to Paris. He was ruined by her, shout the royalists; but long after their separation, we discover him to be possessed of a splendid property in the Marche, and later still, of his town house in Paris. A deed dated April 28th, 1786, unearthed by the Goncourts, fully corroborates her statement that she placed with him fifty thousand livres at ten per cent. interest. I cannot agree with those who treat the receipt as fictitious and see in the document merely an undertaking by Persan to pay his mistress five thousand livres (£200) a year for life. Frenchmen are not like that. It is proved, moreover, that at a later date she lent him another sum of forty thousand livres. "I helped him in his need as he had formerly helped me," is her explanation.

The money had, no doubt, been bestowed on Mme. Théroigne by a former lover, possibly the Englishman, most probably the father of her child. Whether she loved that man one dares not hazard a guess. Certain it is that she loved no man in the years succeeding. The Marquis she accepted because it was more respectable for an unmarried woman, living alone, to have a protector in the Paris of the *ancien régime*. But she had no liking for her situation. Business and sentiment (not much of this on her part) were oddly mixed in their relationship, as the Marquis's letters to her prove. They throw, also, light on her career before the Revolution.

The Marquis begins on a plangent note.

"You know that my attachment will last for ever, and you reply that I may expect from you what my conduct may merit. Things are not equal between us. When you seemed to be giving yourself to me entirely, I exerted myself to please you in every possible way, even beyond my powers. What has been my reward? Hard sayings and never that community of sentiment which alone makes happiness. Have I found that kindness, that abandonment, that confidence, which a man has a right to expect from the woman he loves?"

Under date October, 1787, he asks: "What have I done that you should write to me with such coldness as in your last two letters? Haven't I always done whatever you wished? Do you want to part from me? You rely upon your talent to attain to fortune! Believe me, you dream. . . . You have made me pay you a year's annuity in advance. At least give me a year's grace for the rest. I will pay every six months with the interest, as well as your annuity. I think I deserve this much of your friendship.

"Since your mind has long been made up to separate, I am prepared. . . . I do not like to see you going on the

stage. It is unworthy of you. I sacrificed myself to prevent your committing that same folly with David, two years ago. . . . If you are determined not to come back to France, let me buy your furniture. I demand the option. You can then recover it when you do return."

In his last letter, addressed to her at Genoa, he says : " My feelings for you will never change. I have not been to see you for two reasons : firstly, my affairs ; secondly, because I am aware that I have little influence over you. When you went to England you said it would be only for two months, and you stayed six. On your return to France, I marked your passion for music. You associated with a virtuoso. . . . Then came your determination to go to Italy. . . . When you went to England you said that would not interrupt our connexion, and yet you entered into a five years' contract ! You have never kept your word to me. Dear child, you have cruelly attacked my heart and my purse ! " In a postscript the Marquis adds : " I fear that demon of music which possesses you. Up till now it has not done you much good."

It will have been noticed that the Marquis claims to have made sacrifices on his beloved's account as far back as 1785—that is, two years before she broke with her English lover, according to her own story. His references to her journey to England might give the impression that this was, in fact, her first and only visit to this country. But these discrepancies are of very minor interest. One is most of all struck in this correspondence by the Marquis's jealousy of the Demon of Music. This, then, was his rival in the regard of the woman to whom her enemies ascribed a legion of fleshly paramours. She desired to cultivate her talents, was not content to make the happiness of a man. Moreover, she was ambitious—wanted to make a name for herself. Poor De Persan evidently

found this most unnatural and ungrateful. He strikes me as a little ungrateful himself when he talks about her inroads on his purse, while admitting higher up that he is in her debt.

He was right in saying that her taste made her the dupe of musicians, especially Italians. The David to whom he makes reference was an Italian tenor who appeared in Paris, Easter week, 1785. But she had much more reason to regret her acquaintance with Ferdinando Tenducci, whom she met in London. The retailer of *chroniques scandaleuses* might find it worth while to explore this person's career. He was a male soprano—one of those mutilated beings, called *castrati*, who, despite the prohibition of Clement XIV, continued to sing in the Vatican choir, and nowhere else, down to the accession of Leo XIII. Their description must not be taken in its fullest implication; in Juvenal's day, and after, they were not without interest in or charm for the other sex. Tenducci had tasted the hospitality of a filthy Irish gaol on the charge of having abducted an heiress. This was in 1767, so that when the Belgian girl met him in London some twenty years later, he must have added the weight of years to his artificial disadvantages. However, these were far outweighed in the mind of the music-mad woman by his gifts as a singer and his abilities as a teacher. He induced her to sign a swindling contract, she tells us, and got a lot of money out of her. Turning her back on the Marquis, she proceeded with him to Genoa. There the quarrel took place. He insisted that she should appear on the public stage. This she considered derogatory and declined to do. In England, she had remarked, it would not be accounted derogatory. The Genoese court released her from her contract, but she failed to recover any money from the man-soprano.

And she needed every penny at this time. She had assumed the care of a family. Visiting her birthplace in the summer of '86, she learnt that her father had died a few weeks previously; whereupon, she left a sum of money with her stepmother, to whom she had no reason to be grateful, and promised to provide, not only for her two brothers, but for one of her half-brothers also. The three lads, the generous girl—she was now twenty-six—took with her to Italy. Her sense of responsibility made her press more hardly upon her unloved lover. She wrote to Perregaux, her banker in France, urging him to get all the money due to her out of the Marquis. In Genoa she had been obliged to borrow large sums from the Marchese Gianluca Durazzo, a member of one of the noblest Genoese families. He introduced her into society. To the banker, she writes: "I had the honour of dining yesterday with your friend, the English Consul, who on your account has always shown me particular consideration."

For Pierre Joseph, the eldest of her brothers, she found an opening at Liège, which cost her some three thousand livres. A younger brother she sent to study painting at Rome; and in the spring of 1789 she followed him, having, be it noted, repaid her debts to Durazzo.

It was at Rome the first faint rumble of the coming storm reached her. The States General had been convoked. For the overwhelming majority of handsome young women in that, this, or any age, this news would have had no shadow of interest or significance. But Anne-Josèphe Théroigne felt imperiously summoned to return to France, to be present at this historical event. Hitherto she had paid no attention to political matters; against the established order of things, she had apparently no personal grudge; she was not even a Frenchwoman, but an Austrian subject. De Persan, aware

of some unusual quality in his mistress, which chilled their embrace, accused her at one moment of ambition, at another of vanity, at another of being possessed by that Demon of Music. He was blind to the fact, first of all, that she was not made to be a man's mistress, less still a courtesan. Or, the romantically minded may prefer to believe that her capacity for love had been exhausted by an early lover, the father of her child. In her later twenties, we see her casting about for an interest in life. Such tenderness as she had, she bestows on her brothers. Music, I suspect, has proved a disappointment—either she hasn't as much talent as she thought, or it isn't enough to fill her life. But whatever she might have been at the moment—kept mistress, singer, or *femme du monde*—I feel sure that when she heard Liberty's call to arms Théroigne would have thrown all else aside and obeyed it.

II

She reached Paris on May 11th, 1789, six days after the opening of the States General by Louis XVI, in the Salle des Menus Plaisirs, at Versailles. She put up at the Hotel Toulouse, in the Rue des Vieux-Augustins. "I occupied myself with music," she says, "and read the public prints, which I did not very well understand. Nevertheless, the general excitement soon began to have its effect upon me. I had no notions of the unacknowledged rights of man, but felt within myself a natural love of liberty. An instinct, a living sentiment which I am unable to define, made me approve the Revolution, without knowing why, for I had no education. What little I know I learnt little by little by assisting at the debates of the National Assembly."

(Théroigne at this point in her statement to the Austrian

magistrate is unfair to herself. Educated in the scholastic sense she may not have been, but she had been for some time a great reader. Her correspondence was full of references to her books, and shows the value she attached to them.)

“The evening of July 13th, the day on which the Revolution broke out, I was walking with my maid in the street. I saw many men armed and others who were seeking arms. Presently I came across some soldiers. I asked them if they were for the Tiers-Etat. An officer overhearing me, thought to arrest me, and pursued me, but gave up the chase when he perceived that I was merely a solitary, curious woman.

“The next day I saw men armed with guns, swords, and pikes, as I had the day before, but in much greater number. Many people displayed a green cockade. As soon as I saw others wearing it, I sported one myself. Later it was replaced by the tricolor cockade. This also I displayed.

“I was at the Palais Royal when news came that the Bastille had been taken by the citizens. The public loudly manifested their delight. Many wept for joy, declaring that there would be no more Bastille and no more *lettres de cachet*.

“The King came to Paris. I don't remember the date.¹ I went to meet him with the crowd, mingling with the ranks of the soldiers. I was wearing a white riding-frock and a round hat.

“At the Palais Royal I used to take a walk every day, and assisted at the Dawn of the New Era. What struck me most was the atmosphere of general goodwill. Egotism seemed to be banished from all hearts. There was no longer any distinction of classes, one rubbed shoulders with another, and chatted freely as though in the family circle. The rich,

¹ July 17th.

at this moment of fermentation, mixed freely with the poor, and did not disdain to talk with them as equals. Generally speaking, everyone's physiognomy seemed to have changed. Each dared to assert his natural character and native faculties. I saw many clothed in rags who wore an heroic air. No one with the least sensibility could look on such a spectacle with indifference."

Anne-Josèphe had fallen in love with the Revolution, and henceforth knew no other love.

To watch the march of events she took lodgings at Versailles, where the National Assembly was in session. From the gallery she closely followed the debates. "I did not understand much," she persists, "but instinct told me that the people's cause was just." Already she must have been noticed, not only by the patriots but by the royalists. Whispers of her former connexion with the Marquis de Persan must have gone about. To champions of the old order this attractive young woman seemed a traitor to her sex and to the class to which they assigned her ; for the courtesan is almost necessarily dependent on the rich and the leisured. Not with a sneer, but with the glow of rapture the aristocrat's ex-mistress listened to all this claptrap about civic virtue and the dignity of man. One could chuckle at the royalists' bewildered exasperation. In our own day we have observed the peculiar frenzy of hatred which the woman demagogue arouses in the conservative type of male. But this was then a new thing, and Théroigne does not seem yet to have been aware of it. While she is pictured by Carlyle (relying on royalist sources), "brown-locked, with pike and helmet," seated on a gun, heading the procession of women from Paris on the memorable October 5th, she was, in fact, at her usual place in the gallery. On leaving the Assembly, she

noticed the mob with its cannon, and on one side the Flanders regiment, and the other the Gardes-du-Corps. Going home to the Rue de Noailles, she met three or four starving wretches among whom she divided a loaf of bread. "That evening," she says, "I did not go out, though I knew the deputies had been summoned to meet that evening. The next day, about six, I proceeded to the National Assembly. The door was not yet open. The National Guards were stationed before the Château. There was an enormous crowd. I pushed my way into the different groups to hear what was said. They were speaking of the aristocrats. I spoke of them, too, and not to their credit. Finally, I tried to steal into the ranks of the National Guard, attracted by the shouting of the people who were struggling with the Gardes-du-Corps. But I could see nothing distinctly." Then, as soon as the doors were open, she went up into the tribune, and was among those who successfully protested against the resolution to transfer the sittings to the Salle d'Hercule.

In this passage she seems to minimize her rôle almost as much as her political opponents tried to magnify it. For witnesses testified that they saw a woman answering to her description, dressed according to some in red, according to others in a white riding-suit (to which she herself pleads guilty), going about among the troops, and making them little presents. Most credible of these relations is that of a soldier: a young woman of agreeable appearance, wearing a hat with black feathers, addressed the men, and told them that they would be better employed inside the National Assembly, where she would point out to them the true enemies of the nation—whereupon an officer ordered her to retire, which she did, saying she had thought she was speaking to free citizens. This much, I think, we may believe.

Though even Carlyle at this point distrusts his authority. "One reads that Théroigne had bags of money, which she distributed over Flandre—furnished by whom? Alas, with money-bags, one seldom sits on insurrectionary cannon. Calumnious royalism; Théroigne had only the limited earnings of her profession of unfortunate-female [*sic*]; money she had not, but brown locks, the figure of a heathen goddess, and an eloquent tongue and heart."

She certainly hadn't much money, for upon her return to Paris she had had to pawn a large quantity of her jewels, and she had no earnings from any profession whatever. I wish I could leave her where her foes placed her, enthroned on that insurrectionary cannon; but the glory of having led the women from Paris and of being trampled under the hoofs of the cavalry horses belongs to another heroine—Reine Audu, a name which should not be forgotten.

The Walloon was to show that she was of the same stuff later on. Absorbed by the spectacle of a nation's growth, she followed the National Assembly back to Paris. In her salon at the Hôtel de Grenoble, Rue du Bouloy, she formed a little club called *Les Amis de la Loi*, the object of which was "to elevate the people to the dignity of its rights." Her views at this time, it is conceded, were moderate and liberal. Beaulieu draws a pleasing picture of her. She was extraordinarily vivacious, gabbling in her queer Walloon-French, bubbling with enthusiasm. Among her friends was an Auvergnat named Romme—"a species of Quaker, affecting the most austere modesty, even to the point of uncleanness, with a face that frightened you; he was an obscure metaphysician, a political alchemist, whose fantastic dissertations it was impossible to follow. It was amusing to listen to the *petite* Théroigne endeavouring to improve on the mysteries

of her master, and to hear them, with very different expressions, laugh at the audacity of their own discourse." Many grave persons, adds Beaulieu, who came to be universally respected, sought her love, which she refused with Spartan firmness.

She attended the Club des Cordeliers, held in an old convent, which is near the Musée Dupuytren. It was "an essentially Parisian and revolutionary club open to all . . . a sibylline cavern, which echoed to the passions of the multitude, where the Revolution had its tripod, its frenzy, and its oracles." Upon her approach to the bar of the house, a member greeted her as "The Queen of Sheba, come to visit the Solomon of the Districts." She accepted the description, replying in a speech of considerable eloquence stuffed with Biblical and classical allusions. She proposed that a palace for the National Assembly, worthy of its dignity, should be erected forthwith on the site of the Bastille. The resolution was adopted, but it came to nothing. The editor of a royalist paper observed it was not a time to think of spending money on such projects when misery and unemployment were rife, adding, unkindly, that "it would be better to confine oneself within a modest silence than to advertise oneself by bringing forward such motions."

It was women, of course, who were enjoined to modest silence ! Théroigne, one of the earliest feminists, took the revolutionary formula literally. She could not understand why women should be excluded, as they are to this day in Republican France, from all share in political life and responsibility. She began to be laughed at. When the deputies attended a solemn thanksgiving service at Notre Dame, she was invited to walk with them. The bystanders jeered :

“A woman deputy! That’s something original!” Aristocratic priests insulted her. “I withdrew,” says Théroigne, “although many others who were not deputies were walking with the deputies. *But they were men.* I realized the strength and persistency of masculine prejudice which oppresses my sex and maintains it in servitude.”

She determined to leave Paris. Far from making money as a courtesan, as the filthy royalist press unceasingly represented, she had subsisted on loans from the pawnshop. Between November 16th, 1789, and March 3rd of the following year, she had borrowed five thousand five hundred livres (about £220). “I liked being in Paris,” she informed the Austrian examiner, “but I had not enough money to remain there longer. Moreover, I had always my brothers to keep. My annuity of five thousand livres had not been paid and was not likely to be. For that matter, I had anticipated my income. I had got an advance of a thousand *ecus* (£120) for two years, and my diamonds had long since been pledged. I was in debt, and had for all my wealth a necklace worth some twenty-five louis.

“It was plain that I should have to change my mode of life or leave Paris. I was very much in the public eye, and was accustomed more from taste than from love of ease to a fairly elegant style of living. It was difficult to economize. I resolved, therefore, to leave the social world and to live unknown. I took the name of Poitiers, and was able to accommodate my dress and mode of life to my modest means. The arrival of my brother Pierre in Paris determined me to return to my native land.

“I admit that I left the theatre of the Revolution without regret, for every day I had to endure some unpleasantness in the gallery of the National Assembly. I was beset by the

aristocrats, to whom my zeal and my frankness were distasteful. I was annoyed, traps were laid for me. Even certain patriots, instead of encouraging me, defending me, and doing me justice, held me up to ridicule. That's no more than the truth.

"Besides, I was warned that information had been laid against me at the Châtelet for my share in the episodes of October 5th. Having committed no offence, I was not afraid. But I was scared at length by people reminding me of the notorious partialities of the police tribunal ; also, that I had made enemies, and enemies too powerful to resist.

"Everything, in short, engaged me to leave Paris. I took the diligence for Liège."

Anne-Josèphe had found, like many other enthusiasts before and since, that ideals cannot be pursued upon an empty purse. Desperate enterprises, Robinson Crusoe was advised by his father, may be attempted by the rich, because they have wealth to spare, and by the poor because they have nothing to lose. To engage safely in political revolution, you must either have enough money, banked somewhere, to last out the storm, or be able to earn a living during its continuance. Mlle. Théroigne could not, it seems, command a wage in Paris. Yet, one thinks, she might have taught music or tried her luck as a journalist. A courtesan or kept mistress she would not be.

It was in the spring of 1790 that she returned to her native forests. The outbreaks which had troubled the Austrian Netherlands were pretty well quelled by this time, and the country swarmed with French refugee aristocrats. But Théroigne, she tells us, "for a moment forgot the French Revolution." She "could hardly express the pleasure she felt in seeing once more her native village, the house where she was born, her uncle, and her old playmates. Every

evening she joined her friends in the games of her childhood. On Sundays they danced and scampered about the fields."

But she did not forget to say a word in season. She roused the villagers against the privileges and exactions of the curé and the miller, and spoke so irreverently of dignitaries that the *garde champêtre*, an ex-Austrian dragoon, menaced her with his sword. Her freedom, however, was not displeasing to the young Baronne de Sélys, the wife of the lord of the manor; she took a great fancy to this strange young woman who preached novel doctrines, and had witnessed the earth-shaking events of Paris. The Baron himself appeared not less friendly. To his indignant *émigré* friends he explained that he was in reality only keeping an eye on her in their interest.

Théroigne, meanwhile, appears genuinely to have been more absorbed in her own affairs than in the fate of nations. She was still corresponding with Perregaux about money matters. The Marquis de Persan had probably become too much embarrassed by the processes of the Revolution to fulfil his engagements with punctuality. His former mistress was obliged to pawn her necklace and her remaining jewels at Liége. As usual, the money was wanted more for her brothers than herself; though Pierre Joseph, the eldest, being now twenty-seven, ought to have been earning his living instead of sponging on a sister only two years his senior.

But if Anne-Josèphe had forgotten the Revolution, the enemies of the Revolution had by no means forgotten her. At Paris a warrant for her arrest had been issued by the Châtelet, the old royal police office which continued to function for a while unregarded by the new powers which were shaping France. This warrant the Chevalier de la

Valette and other French refugees brought to the notice of the Austrian authorities, and with their connivance, seized the revolutionary heroine while she lay in bed at the farm of La Boverie, on the night of February 15th, 1791. Pretending at first that they were sympathizers, hustling her out of the reach of her enemies, they pushed her into a carriage which departed at full gallop in the direction of the Rhine. It was not long before Théroigne discovered that she had been kidnapped by the royalists. On March 17th she found herself lodged in the fortress of Kufstein, on the frontier of Tirol and Bavaria, whence she could enjoy a magnificent view of the Austrian Alps. From Innsbruck, she had written to Pierre Joseph, apprizing him of her capture and deportation. The young man at once wrote off to Perregaux, naively pointing out that by losing his sister he was deprived of his mainstay of existence. He appealed, also, to the Baron de Sélys, who lent him money and redeemed the jewels pledged at Liège.

The detested revolutionary female had been transported to Austria instead of back to France by the royalists, because they knew very well that the warrant issued by the Châtelet would be quashed. The Austrians, they never doubted, would be stern gaolers, especially as they had taken the precaution to accuse their prisoner of having conspired against the life of Marie Antoinette. The kidnappers were from the first disappointed. The Tirolese are a kindly folk, and the gaoler of Kufstein was soon able to humour the captive's wish for books and a piano. After what seemed an eternity to Théroigne, the examining magistrate arrived from Vienna. He bore the French name of Blanc. The *Confessions*, above referred to, are the records of the successive interrogatories which began on May 28th. Théroigne impressed her

examiner more favourably than did her French accusers. He reported the charges against her to be non-proven. She was transported in August to Vienna and placed in the care of her uncle, Campinado, a banker. "I am no longer in prison," she writes, "but in a private house, where every kindness is shown me. I can take walks and go about in public, so long as I am accompanied." She had craved an audience of the Emperor, Leopold II. There is no proof of this having been granted; but she saw the Chancellor, Kaunitz, and on November 24th, 1791, she left Vienna for Brussels and liberty, with a viaticum of six hundred crowns from the Emperor's purse.

She had appealed to Cæsar and appealed successfully. In a letter to Perregaux, she speaks highly of his Roman and Apostolic Majesty, as indeed she ought, but as "to your aristocrats, they have resorted to the basest methods, to the most infamous intrigues, to deprive me for ever of my liberty. If it had depended upon them I should still be in the fortress of Kufstein. Such is the character of French cavaliers!"

At her deliverance she had a right to be elated. We are not sure whether she was informed of the Austrian doctors' report upon her. They thought her mind was more disordered than her body; perhaps in consequence of a malady which, according to the *Confessions*, she had contracted in Italy.¹

III

The Revolution, meanwhile, had moved on. Louis XVI had tried to escape, had been brought back from Varennes, and was with his family, to all intents and purposes a

¹ But no mention of this is made in the records of her post-mortem examination.

prisoner. The whole political structure of France had been changed beyond recognition. The old National Assembly had been dissolved, and in the new one the parties of "the Left" predominated. In November, it was decreed that the *émigrés* skulking on the frontiers should be liable to the penalty of death unless they made their submission forthwith; before this an amnesty had been voted, covering all offences connected with the Revolution prior to September, 1791.

There was nothing, therefore, to hinder Théroigne's return to France. She stayed a while in her own country, to set her brothers on their legs again; then set off for Paris, boiling with resentment against the royalists who had sought to ruin her. The persecution to which she had been subjected had enormously increased her popularity. She was not laughed at now. On January 26th, 1792, Dufourny at the Jacobins' Club announced that Mlle. Théroigne was present in the women's tribune. The members rose and invited her to descend into the body of the hall, into which she was conducted amid acclamations. She was "received with all the interest and respect due to her sex and her misfortunes." The royalists by venting their spleen upon a woman had raised her in the esteem of their opponents. In that moment of enthusiasm, judging by the utterances of some of the Jacobins, Théroigne might have thought the battle of her sex was nearly won.

Thus encouraged, she associated herself with Léon and other feminists in demanding for women the right to take up arms in defence of the Revolution. "Give us pikes and muskets," she cried. To a small body of women whom she had succeeded in getting together, she presented a flag on March 25th, and addressed them thus: "Let us take up arms—we are entitled to do so by nature and even by the

law. . . . Show Europe that Frenchwomen understand their rights, and are abreast of this eighteenth century in despising prejudices—which, by the fact that they are prejudices are absurd and more often than not, immoral. . . . It is time for women to emerge from the shameful nullity to which men's ignorance, pride, and injustice have so long condemned them."

Recollection of her poor Marquis's unwanted caresses, perhaps, fired her. We have heard talk like that nearer our own time. And the same kind of retort. The royalists jeered: "The ardour which the Jacobins' hack, Demoiselle Théroigne, put into the work of commanding the ladies who are ready to shed their blood for the National Assembly was such that her moustache flew off and was unhappily lost." The revolutionary press marshalled the now familiar arguments: "To bear her mother company, to sweeten the lot of her spouse, to care for her children, these are the proper occupations and the true duties of woman."

And so the working women of Paris also thought. Théroigne made efforts to get the *citoyennes* of the Faubourg St. Antoine to meet together three times a week. One day she met with such a rough reception from the women themselves that she had to take refuge at a police station, and was got away with difficulty. Probably her assailants were instigated by their husbands. The artizans of the quarter, it was said, expected on their return from work to find peace and quiet, not to be engaged in political arguments by their wives.

Robespierre, the pure-minded, deistical monster, repudiated the use which the feminist had made of his name. To the fathers of the Revolution her doctrines seemed as pernicious as aristocracy itself. Latin society to this day is founded on

the subjection of woman. Théroigne seems to have realized that the cause of women was for the moment lost, and to have devoted herself to the revolutionary interest generally. We find her amongst the signatories of the petition to the Assembly to accord a triumphal reception to the mutineers of the Châteaueux regiment who were tramping back from the hulks of Brest. But soon after, when Collot d'Herbois at the Jacobins', congratulated himself that he, like Robespierre, had forfeited the heroine's confidence, the club shook with laughter. At once Théroigne leaped down from her tribune, and forcing her way to the table clamoured to be heard. The sitting was suspended by the chairman.

The taint which the Austrian medical men had detected in the captive of Kufstein was slowly asserting itself. The young woman whose first care was for her brothers, who would not thrill to a lover's caresses, whose early opinions were moderate and liberal, was easily transported with fury now. For that reason, though sneered at by the talkers in the clubs, she was listened to readily by the mob. Came the memorable Tenth of August. The Germans were marching on Paris to restore the royal authority in full. The cry, "the country is in danger," even when not voiced by a powerful Press, is generally enough to make the public lose its head and want to cut off everybody else's. Paris rose in insurrection. A new municipality—new, with the exception of Théroigne's reputed lover, Pétion—was installed at the Hotel de Ville. Théroigne harangued the patriots, exhorted them to make an end of tyranny, to do—what? "Seventeen individuals have been seized in the Champs Elysées, by exploratory Patriotism; they flitting dim-visible, by it flitting dim-visible. Ye have pistols, rapiers, ye Seventeen? One of these accursed 'false patrols'; that go marauding

with anti-national intent ; seeking what they can spy, what they can spill ! The Seventeen are carried to the nearest Guard-house ; eleven of them escape by back passages. ‘How is this ?’ Demoiselle Théroigne appears at the front entrance with sabre, pistols, and a train ; denounces treasonous connivance ; demands, seizes the remaining six, that the justice of the people be not trifled with. Of which six, two more escape in the whirl and debate of Club-law court ; the last unhappy four are massacred, as Mandat was : two ex-bodyguards ; one dissipated abbé ; one royalist pamphleteer, Sulleau, known to us by name, able editor and wit of all work. Poor Sulleau : his *Acts of the Apostles*, and brisk placard-journals (for he was an able man) come to finish in this manner. . . . ”¹

By the act or instigation of Théroigne herself, it is frequently alleged. Recognizing him as the author of the most venomous slanders upon her, she seized Sulleau by the collar, a gesture which was understood by her followers as the signal to lynch him. But (Peltier says) the journalist showed fight. He picked up a sabre and attacked her, in the end being disarmed and dispatched. That Théroigne could have identified him as her traducer is held to be very doubtful. Whether she did or not, she must have regarded him as a sworn foe of the Revolution and his life as forfeit.

Baron Thiébault, then a very young man and a sergeant of grenadiers, tried, on this occasion, to save the prisoners. Many women, he writes, have impressed him, but none so deeply as Théroigne—“an impression which a thousand years would not efface.” She was “wearing a black felt hat, turned up in the Henri Quatre style, with plumes of the same colour, and a suit of blue cloth ; in her belt were a brace of

¹ Carlyle.

pistols and a poignard ; she was brown, and about twenty years of age [*sic*] ; and (I say it with a sort of horror) pretty, very pretty, with a prettiness wonderfully enhanced by a sort of revolutionary erethism impossible to describe."

Thus we may picture her, the rest of that bloody day, a lovely Fury, hounding on the Marseillaise, firing her pistols again and again at the Swiss, rallying those Republicans who had fled, attacking a second time, and—winning the day for the Revolution. A pity it is that she did not leave her handsome body there dead on the flags of the Carrousel, where the thousand-years-old monarchy had died.

Her prowess earned her a delusive gleam of popularity. Dr. John Moore, the author of *Zeluco*, speaks of the applause which greeted her entrance at the Jacobins' club, some months after these events. "She was dressed in a kind of English riding habit, but her jacket was the uniform of the National Guards. She seems about one or two and thirty, somewhat about the middle height of women, and has a smart martial air which in a man would not be disagreeable."

The Englishman alone speaks positively to having seen her between August, 1792, and the following May. There are some grounds for believing that with other women leaders she visited the armies on the Belgian front ; which may have been the sequel to or an excuse for another visit to her home in the Ardennes. For there was still the matter of that necklace pawned at Liége and redeemed by the Baron de Sélys to be adjusted. While she was proclaiming liberty, equality, and fraternity at the street corner, while she was storming the Tuileries, poverty was ever plucking at her skirts, reminding her that the Republican gospel was after all unsubstantial fare. She had been used, she told the Austrians, to a life of elegance—she was living now in one

room in the Rue Honoré. And her second brother, Joseph, he who had studied art in Rome, was now in Paris, a burden, we may be sure, not a support to her. Many men would have had her for mistress ; but she remained the bride of the Revolution.

Of blood, she had had her fill. In May, 1793, the sneering Parisians read her name at the foot of a placard, appealing for unity and concord. And how were these good things to be achieved ? By the good offices of French women, whom Théroigne no longer called upon to fight but to reconcile their husbands and their brothers, as the Roman dames had done in Coriolanus's time. She proposed a kind of women's political police. Women were to attend all meetings, insist upon a fair hearing for any sort of patriot, and to mark down those who refused it or who were royalists past praying for.

The Parisians laughed and went their way—towards the Terror. Théroigne, inclining more and more towards the Moderates, was identified with the declining Brissotin faction. Dreaming dreams of peace and brotherhood, she approached the parliament-house on the morning of May 15th. Someone called her a filthy name. She found herself assailed by the gangs of women attached to the extremist faction who beset the neighbourhood of the Convention. Théroigne stood to fight. In vain !—the furies were too many for her, and holding her down, subjected her to chastisement of the most ignominious kind. She was delivered, according to one account, by her political opponent, Marat.

This public humiliation put an end to the Walloon's political career. It has been repeatedly asserted that shame drove her insane upon the spot. That would be to suppose in her a delicacy more brittle even than the Christian martyrs ! Letters are in existence to prove that she was capable of

attending to her ever more desperate financial affairs six weeks later. But the blow had been a deadly one. Her own sex had turned on her, repudiated her, inflicted on her the grossest of insults. Unnerved, she beheld the overthrow of her faction, the Girondins, and the bloody mist rising all over France. Fear, not outraged modesty, I suspect it was that kept her crouching in her single room throughout the Reign of Terror. Robespierre was in power, but a whole year passed before he remembered her. She had been already three days under arrest when Brother Joseph adroitly petitioned the civil authorities to appoint a trustee for the property of his sister, Anne-Josèphe Théroigne, who was insane.

Mad, she was. That was the fate which had been reserved for her, foreseen or not by the physicians at Kufstein. By losing her reason she saved her head. Even Robespierre did not deem it worth while to insist upon the execution of a certified lunatic. On June 3rd, 1794, the brother's petition was granted. "The brown-haired, fire-hearted demoiselle" was transferred from a prison to a madhouse. Her property, such as it was, was taken charge of by a trustee, to be handed over, ultimately, one supposes, to her brothers. From her new and temporary place of confinement she tossed a letter into the street. It was addressed, strange to say, to St. Just, of Robespierre's faction, beseeching him in wild, incoherent terms, to help her. Within less than two months St. Just had gone with his master to the guillotine. France was saved; but Théroigne did not know it. The darkness had closed in on her for ever.

At the Hôtel Dieu she was overheard, as late as 1797, to mutter the words "*liberté, nivellement.*" Once she seemed to recognize a former political associate. By the end of the century all recollection as well as understanding of human

affairs had gone. She had become a mere living body, interesting only to the scientist. Even ordinary animal sensibility was lost. In the coldest weather she rejected clothing and loved to drench her bed and her cell with cold water. She lingered on, year after year, as such creatures do, not dying till June 8th, 1817.

By that time there was a king again in France, and the surgeons, unable to read the riddle of that dead brain, thought fit to stress her past conduct and opinions as symptoms of insanity. At a much later date, their report was submitted to the alienist, Garnier. He did not find it very enlightening, but deduced an hereditary taint (not acquired, be it noted), and summed up the subject as "a degenerate but not inferior." Some profound physical degeneration must indeed have sapped Anne-Josèphe's brain ; but degenerate, morally or intellectually, she was not. From "vice," in the narrower sense of the term, she was notably averse ; her recorded utterances betray nothing of the megalomania so often expressed by the insane ; where money was concerned, she was honest and business-like. She was above, not below, the normal in that she tended to lose sight of herself in wider interests. We find her, first, striving to keep body and soul together ; next, eschewing the ease of the kept woman's life in order to cultivate her talents ; forsaking all other interests at the call of the Revolution ; finally forfeiting her popularity and jeopardizing her head by her advocacy of the cause of women—of the women who derided and outraged her. All the while she keeps an anxious motherly eye on the affairs of her brothers, but seems listless about her own. The "degeneracy" of Anne-Josèphe Théroigne bears a strong resemblance to what has been recognized in others as unselfishness.

She was of the real heroic stuff, out of which circumstances can make saints and martyrs and patriots. She would have mounted the stair of the guillotine, I doubt not, with as fine an air as Mme. Roland, had not those she would have died for laughed at her and chastised her as a naughty child. They left her with nothing to live for and nothing to die for. And to this day little honour has been shown her by the Republic which she loved, and by the enfranchised women of other countries whose battle she fought almost single-handed. Charlotte Corday, who used the assassin's knife, is thought more highly of¹ than the "fire-hearted demoiselle," who, with sword and pistol, matched herself in open fight against the mercenary Swiss that France—and woman—might be free.

¹ Especially by English writers who labour under the delusion that Charlotte was a Royalist.

“ THE DEAR EMMA ”
(EMMA, LADY HAMILTON).

I

EMMA, afterwards Lady Hamilton, than whom few women have been more written about and certainly none more often painted, was born at the village of Neston, in Cheshire, most probably in 1765, or according to some authorities, two or even four years earlier. As she died in 1815 she was a contemporary of the Demoiselle Théroigne. A Plutarch might have drawn an instructive parallel between the two. Both sprang from the people ; both made their entry into the great world as kept mistresses ; one championed the cause of the Revolution, the other the Old Régime ; both perished poor and misérable. Further and closer comparison would be unfavourable to the English woman. Her face was in the beginning her fortune, and continues to win her sympathy. One of her French biographers, unaware, perhaps, that physical attraction determines the marriages of the working class in this country, romantically suggests that her beauty must have been derived from an aristocratic father, thus most unjustifiably impugning the virtue of her excellent mother. In her baptismal certificate (May 12, 1765) she is described as “ Emy, daughter of Henry Lyon, smith, of Ness, by Mary, his wife.” Whether “ Emy ” was a misspelling of “ Amy ” or of “ Emily ” is not clear. Nor can any suspicion of blue-blood attach to her mother’s people, who were “ mostly sailors or labourers,”



EMMA HART
(After the painting by George Romney)

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though one of them, William Kidd, attained the dignity of a publican, and was heard to complain that he was "never brought up to work."

Emma's father, the smith, died in the year of her birth, and she grew up under the thatched roof of her mother's mother at Hawarden, in Flintshire. Her mother, meanwhile, seems to have been earning her living as a cook, a trade in which she achieved distinction. Emma, about the age of fifteen, went into service with a Dr. Budd, at St. James's Market, London. Most likely during an interval of unemployment she met a naval officer, afterwards Admiral Willet-Payne. By him she is said to have been first "seduced," or "betrayed," but it is notable that while maintaining in one of her letters that her "sense of virtue was not overcome," she lays no blame on him, and in later life met him on terms of friendship. One authority (Sir John Laughton) regards it as certain that she had her first child by this sailor; but Mr. Walter Sichel won't have that. At all events, their relations do not appear to have continued for more than a few weeks. About this time her loveliness attracted the notice of Dr. Graham, a queer sort of health merchant, who selected her for the part of the Goddess Hygeia in his absurd Temple of Health. Romney may have seen her in this pose—her acquaintance with him dates from these early years. So also may Sir Henry Featherstonehaugh, a hard-riding, hard-drinking, hard-swearing Sussex squire, while he was having a bout of London life. I do not suppose Emma found posing as a goddess very profitable. It is quite easy to believe that "only through distress was her virtue vanquished" when she accepted Sir Harry's offer of protection.

In 1781, in her seventeenth or eighteenth year, therefore, we find her installed at his place, Up Park, near Harting, as

his hostess or tea-maker, a form of concubinage common enough in those days, and not without a certain veneer of respectability. She passed for some reason yet undiscovered as Mrs. Hart. The entry in the parish register of Harting of the burial of one, Francis Lyon, a name otherwise not recorded in the locality, on April 7th, 1781, suggests to some minds that this was an infant of hers, possibly the child of Willet-Payne; but again this suspicion is spurned by Mr. Sichel.

Francis, it is remarked, was the second name of that elegant gentleman and virtuoso, Greville, who set the smith's daughter on the road to fame. He was the second son of Lord Brooke, and nephew of Sir William Hamilton, British Ambassador at Naples. He was a bachelor, and at the time of his first sight of Emma, thirty-two years of age. A close intimacy and identity of tastes united him to his ambassador uncle. They called themselves Pliny the Elder and Pliny the Younger. There was a good deal of the Roman gentleman about Greville. He was always grave beyond his years, dignified, upright, and public spirited. "*Par excellence* the man of taste rather than the man of feeling . . . socially a disciple of the old-fashioned Chesterfield . . . a nice moralist of the immoral."¹ An epicure, I should add, in the finer sense of the word, studious of all the graces of life, but hampered, as he constantly complained, by his limited means.

Paying a visit to Up Park, Greville at once spotted his host's tea-maker as a jewel worthy of a finer setting. Beauty such as this was wasted on a man of Sir Henry's breeding. That an utterly uneducated country girl, recently plucked from the streets of London, should have so far interested him proves that real warm blood ran in the dilettante's veins, after all. He, on the other hand, must have come as a

¹ Walter Sichel. *Emma, Lady Hamilton*.

revelation to Emma whose paramours so far do not seem to have been much above her intellectually or emotionally. They, of course, did not affect any interest in her except for her body—Mr. Greville displayed an interest in her mind and her behaviour. He corrected her solecisms, gave her lessons in manners, was prodigal of advice, and held up for her pattern an impeccable and immaculate Mrs. Wells, who occupied somewhere a similar respectable and ambiguous position. Greville may have been the cold-hearted prig that some represent him ; but to a girl who had so far never been looked upon by a man of quality as anything but the instrument of a sensation, he must have appeared a real friend, a protector in the literal sense.

And such he was to prove. Whether or not he had found it within his code to make love to her while he was under his friend's roof, it was to Greville that the poor girl turned when, once more cast adrift, she found herself on the eve of her first or second confinement in January, 1782. From Chester she writes to " dear Grevell " (even his name she could not spell right)—" I have never heard from Sir H., and he is not at Leicester now, I am sure. I have wrote seven letters, and no answer. What shall I do ? Good God, what shall I do ? I can't come to town for want of money, I have not a farthing to bless myself with, and I think my friends looks coolly on me. Oh, God, that I was in your possession or in Sir H., what a happy girl would I have been. Girl, indeed ! What else am I but a girl in distress—in real distress ? Oh, for God's sake tell me what is to become of me. Oh, dear Grevell, write to me. Don't tell my mother what distress I am in, and do afford me some comfort."

Greville starts his reply, of which he kept a pressed copy, by reading the desperate girl a lecture. " It was your duty

[he writes] to deserve good treatment, and it gave me great concern to see you imprudent the first time you came to G. [himself?] from the country, as the same conduct was repeated when you was last in town, I began to despair of your happiness. To prove to you that I do not accuse you falsely, I only mention five guineas and half a guinea for coach. But I will forget your faults and bad conduct to Sir H. and myself, and will not repent my good humour if I find you have learned to value yourself and endeavour to preserve your friends by good conduct and affection. You are sensible that for the next three months your situation will not admit of a giddy life, if you wished it. . . . ”

He warns her against taxing the squire directly with the paternity of the unborn child.¹ This warning, read in conjunction with the above reproaches on her “bad conduct” and need of self-respect, suggests that she had been cast off by Sir Harry, not for extravagance in the matter of coach hire (the writer’s own particular grievance against her), but on a strong suspicion of infidelity. Fetherstonehaugh, as his after life proved, was not a mere heartless brute, and no man but a brute would pitch his mistress out of doors because she was about to bear him a child. That the child was a legacy from her liaison with Willet-Payne is again unlikely²—as such it could hardly have come as a shock to the second man, unless the first liaison lasted a very few days and he had been told nothing about it. But Emma makes no reference to her sailor lover, nor does her letter contain any insinuation against

¹ It is unfortunate that Jeaffreson and Sichel, out of regard for their heroine’s reputation, do not reproduce this passage textually. I have not been able to inspect the letter myself, as the Morrison collection to which it belonged was dispersed in 1919.

² Mr. Sichel seems to hint at this possibility.

Greville himself. What she meant by the “giddiness” of her girlhood seems to me pretty obvious.

This unkind explanation of her disaster is warranted by other warnings contained in the latter part of Greville’s letter : “After you have told me that Sir H. gave you barely money to get to your friends, and has never answered one letter since, and neither provides for you nor takes any notice of you, it might appear laughing at you to advise you to make Sir H. more kind and attentive. But it is a great deal more for me *to advise* you never to see him again. . . . You must, however, do either one or the other. My advice, then, is to take a steady resolution. I shall then be free to dry up the tears of my lovely Emily and to give her comfort. If you do not forfeit my esteem perhaps my Emily may be happy. Remember, I never will give up my peace, or continue my connexion one moment after my confidence is betrayed. As to the child . . . its mother shall obtain it kindness from me and it shall never want. I enclose you some money ; do not throw it away.”

Emma, overjoyed, we may be sure, did not hesitate to renounce Sir Henry Fetherstonehaugh, and to take the required oath of allegiance to her dear Greville. As to the child which she was then expecting, there is a dispute. Professor Laughton and others maintain that it died in infancy or was still-born, and that the “little Emma,” whom Greville, true to his word, befriended, was an older child, the daughter, most likely, of Willet-Payne. On balance, however, the evidence supports Mr. Sichel’s contention that there was no earlier child, and that this was the one born in the early part of 1782. At first called Hart, and later on Carew, she was afterwards sent to school near Manchester, where her grandmother visited her as late as 1801. By that

time her mother had every reason for keeping her in the background and in ignorance of her parentage. But being taken care of by her maternal aunt, Mrs. Connor, the girl came at last at least to suspect her origin. Emma, then Lady Hamilton, may really have been speaking of her when she complained that one of the Connors, "Anne," had been saying she was her child. This was in 1806; in which year, the unacknowledged daughter went abroad to earn her own living as a singer or musician. Four years after she took final leave of her mother in a touching and dignified letter: "It shall never be said that I avail myself of your partiality, or my own inclination, unless I learn that my claim on you is greater than you have hitherto acknowledged. But the time may come when the same reasons may cease to operate, and then, with a heart filled with tenderness and affection, will I show you both my duty and attachment. In the meantime, should you really wish to see me, such a meeting would be one of the happiest moments of my life, but for the reflection that it may also be the last, as I leave England in a few days, and may, perhaps, never return to it again."

Such a parting would have seemed incredible and hideous to Emma at seventeen years of age, when Greville allowed her to have her baby with her from time to time at the establishment he set up at Edgeware Row, in the rural suburb of Paddington.¹ More strangely, as it will seem to most people, he also extended his hospitality to her mother, the smith's widow, who took the unnecessarily high-sounding name of Mrs. Cadogan. This woman was probably a more remarkable person than her famous daughter. She kept pace with Emma

¹ On the north side of Paddington Green, a modern house called Greville House may commemorate the site; but in old maps, Edgeware Road, down to Tyburn, is called Edgeware Row.

as she advanced in life, managed to adapt herself, more or less, to the company of the great, and was regarded with deep affection by Nelson. Able at her marriage eighteen years before only to make her mark, she started her education at the same time as her daughter.

For Greville, having now got her at his mercy, set to work to improve his Emma's mind. This abuse of his power would have alienated most girls' affection ; but Emma loved him as she probably never loved any man. " Oh, Greville," she writes, " when I think of your goodness, your tender kindness, my heart is so full of gratitude that I want to express it." She very soon found words, though she did not know how to spell them, and was at no time hereafter at a loss to express her feelings. It may have been sheer happiness that made her burst into song, and in the midst of an admiring crowd at Ranelagh, to the enormous disgust and indignation of the Honourable Charles Francis Greville. Her repentance, however, was so deep as to disarm his wrath. Three years after, her protector was able complacently to observe : " She does not wish for much society, but to retain two or three creditable acquaintances in the neighbourhood she had avoided every appearance of giddiness, and prides herself on the neatness of her person and the good order of her house ; these are habits both comfortable and convenient to me."

Greville had found an ideal mistress, and exhibited her with proper pride to half-a-dozen carefully selected friends. He was not jealous or suspicious, as her past might have entitled him to be. Though attending so carefully to her mind, he showed a proper appreciation of her beauty, and allowed her to sit for Romney. The rapture into which her beauty, and if we are to believe Hayley, her personality, threw the prematurely old painter, hastened his end. Still, through

her, he won immortality. To her he vowed he owed his inspiration. At this stage, if at no other, Emma was undoubtedly lovable—her love for Greville made her that ; but there was nothing of the Egeria in her. What relit the flagging fame of Romney's genius was the purely physical beauty of her face and form. It is notable, by the way, that he painted his inspirer as Circe. Perhaps she was one, but in the picture she looks more like Una with the Lion or a Fairy Queen. Romney's biographers have no need to assure us that his love for his model was platonic. The Honourable Charles would have seen to that.

He kept Emma four years. To this period belong the letters written by her from Parkgate, a small watering-place in Cheshire, where she spent a holiday with her baby. She is always longing for her lover ; she is always apologising for the expense to which she puts him ; she delights in her child and is concerned for its future. " Tell me what to do with the child. For she is a great romp, and I can hardly master her. She is tall, has good eyes, and as to lashes, she will be passable ; but she has overgrown all her clothes. I am making and mending all I can for her. Pray, my dear Greville, do let me come home as soon as you can, for I am almost broken-hearted at being parted from you. You don't know how much I love you ; and your behaviour to me when we parted was so kind, I don't know what to do." Of the child whom she was to disavow, she writes : " Oh, Greville, you don't know how I love her ! Indeed, I do. When she comes and looks in my face and calls me ' mother,' then indeed I truly am a mother. . . . She has a right to my protection, and she shall have it as long as I can, and I will do all in my power to prevent her falling into the error her poor miserable mother fell into. But why do I say miserable ? Am I not happy

above any of my sex, at least in my situation? Does not Greville love me, or, at least, like me? Does he not protect me? Does he not provide for me? Is he not a father to my child? Why do I call myself miserable?” Perhaps because she knew she was to be separated so soon from her little daughter; for Greville insisted on little Emma being put to school, where her “bad disposition,” manifest at two-and-a-half, might be corrected by good example. The mother resigns herself: “But I won’t think. All my happiness now is Greville, and to think that he loves me. PS.—I bathe Emma, and she is very well and grows. Her hair will grow very well on her forehead, and I don’t think her nose will be very snub. Her eyes is blue and pretty. But she don’t speak through her nose, but she speaks countryfied, but she will forget it. Adieu, I long to see you.”

In these letters may be faintly detected the kept woman’s haunting sense of the insecurity of her position. It was not love only, though that was passionate and sincere, which made her grovel at her lover’s feet, which made her tremble at his slightest frown. As far as I have been able to read, the letters contain no allusion to her future—that abstention being, of course, one of the implied conditions of the association. But “Mrs. Cadogan” must surely have reminded her that things could not go on like this for ever. I don’t suppose she hoped her protector would eventually marry her. Knowing that he was from his own standpoint hard up, she probably expected him, on the contrary, sooner or later to marry some rich woman, and may have hoped that she would be rich enough to enable him to maintain her as well.

Greville was not, as it happened, keen on marriage, but like other well-connected, easy-living bachelors he was ready to consider marriage with a wealthy woman. A suggestion

of this kind had been made him by his uncle, Hamilton. The ambassador's first wife died in 1782, and it is possible, Mr. Sichel thinks, that when he returned home to bury her, he may first have caught sight of his nephew's tea-maker. Visiting England again in 1784, he was a frequent guest at the little house in Edgeware Row. He complimented his nephew on his nice taste, pinched Emma's cheek, and told her to call him "uncle." Certainly, his excellency was fifty-four, but he looked ten years younger and was livelier than his nephew. Emma took a fancy to him and he to Emma. Greville, it may be presumed, looked on at first not over pleased; then with the shrewdness for which one hates him, and which often blinds us to his fine qualities, not at all ill pleased. He belonged, after all, to the English aristocracy, the most astute body in the world. Sir William by marrying might defeat all his expectations; it would be well if he could fix his resurgent passion and divert him from all thought of a lawful bride. Sir William's clergyman brother, on being consulted, was of the same mind—no doubt, for equally disinterested reasons!—the diplomatist was too old to attempt the arduous business of courtship, a ready-made love must be found for him.

The plan took definite shape in Greville's brain. He must get rid of his mistress some day or another, and by passing her on to his uncle he would provide for her and avert the disappointment of his hopes. Certainly, it was hard to think of a more advantageous scheme for the girl herself. The Honourable Charles had a positive genius for reconciling his own interests with other people's.

The scheme was broached to Sir William in March, 1785. "If you did not choose a wife, I wish the tea-maker of Edgeware Row was yours, if I could without banishing myself



EMMA HART AS "CASSANDRA"
(After the painting by George Romney)

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from a visit to Naples. I do not know how to part with what I am not tired with. I do not know how to go on, and I give her every merit of prudence and moderation and affection. She shall never want, and if I am forced to stop by necessity, I may give her part of my pittance. I think I could secure on her near one hundred pounds a year. I think you might settle another on her. I am not a dog in the manger. If I could go on I would never make this arrangement, but to involve myself in distress, and then be unable to provide for her at all, would make me miserable by thinking myself unjust to her.” He was reduced to it as the only alternative to parting with his collection of minerals ! He gives her an excellent character, and by placing her within his uncle’s reach, “ renders a necessity which would otherwise be heart-breaking, tolerable and even comforting.”

The offer was accepted—in terms which have not been preserved to us. Nor did Greville draw back upon his rejection by the heiress he had had in view for himself ; from which it may be charitably inferred that he genuinely was too poor to keep Emma. The transaction is considered too harshly, it appears to me, by certain of Emma’s champions. Indeed, Greville comes in for more blame than is laid on Sir Harry for turning out the girl, neck and crop, into the streets, when she was about to become a mother.

Not till a whole year had passed had he strength enough to carry out his resolution. There was no hope, of course, of obtaining Emma’s own consent to the transfer. It is honourable to her, and to the two men, that no attempt was made to secure her acquiescence by enlarging on the uncle’s wealth and the nephew’s comparative poverty, and the consequent advantages to her of the change. Greville told her that he had to go to Scotland for five or six months on business, and

could not take her with him ; in the meantime, she might pay a visit to Sir William, at Naples, where she would be heartily welcomed, and could further improve herself by learning Italian. He would fetch her home at the end of the term.

Never suspecting that she was simply being got rid of, the girl consented. We have no account of the parting—it may be guessed to have been a tearful one. “ I shall have many tears to wipe from those charming eyes,” wrote Sir William, on being advised of her coming. Chaperoned by her mother and escorted by the painter, Gavin Hamilton, Emma set out on her fateful journey on March 1st, 1786. On April 26th, she arrived at the British Embassy in Naples, the Palazzo Sessa. As often happens, the strange sights and scenes, instead of helping her to forget, only quickened her longing for the man she loved. The day of her arrival was her birthday. “ Oh, God,” she wrote at once to Greville, “ that day you used to smile on me and stay at home, and be kind to me—that *that* day I should be at such a distance from you ! But my comfort is that I rely upon your promise, and September or October I shall see you. For to live without you is impossible. I love you to that degree that at this time there is not a hardship upon earth either of poverty, cold, death, or even to walk barefooted to Scotland to see you, but what I would undergo. . . . I respect Sir William, I have a great regard for him as the uncle and friend of you, and he loves me, Greville. But he never can be anything nearer to me than your uncle and my sincere friend. He never can be my lover.”

Greville, sticking to his plan with a crazy tenacity, no doubt sniffed and said to himself : “ We shall see.” Hamilton, much less of a cynic, hoped, and saturated his prize with

kindness. He enthroned Emma as a queen of beauty, before whom his friends bowed; he showed her the gorgeous panorama of the South. But all the while the girl was sick for the sight of her lover, listening, as we should now say, for the postman's knock. For he wrote only to say that he was very grateful to Sir William for his care of her. Fourteen or sixteen letters she wrote him before she realised the situation. Here are a few: passages "I am now only writing to beg of you for God's sake to send me one letter, if it is only a farewell. Sure I have deserved this for the sake of the love you once had for me. Greville, you will never meet with anybody that has a truer affection for you than I have. If I don't hear from you, and that you are coming according to promise, I shall be in England at Christmas at farthest. I will see you once more for the last time. Life is insupportable without you. Oh, my heart is entirely broke. I have a language master, a singing master, music, etc., but what is it for? If it was to amuse you, I should be happy. I have lived with you five years, and you have sent me to a strange place, and no prospect but thinking you was coming to me. Instead of which, I was told . . . No, no, I respect him, but no never. Give me one guinea a week for everything, and live with me, and I shall be contented."

At last a letter came. Her eyes were opened. Furiously, the insulted woman wrote: "Nothing can express my rage. Greville, to advise me—you that used to envy my smiles! How with cool indifference to advise me! If I was with you, I would murder you and myself both. I will go to London, there go into every excess of vice till I die, a miserable, broken-hearted wretch, and leave my fate as a warning to young women never to be too good; for now you have made me love you, you made me good, you have abandoned me."

But soon, realizing that all was over, she "submits to what God and Greville pleases," with a last infinitely pathetic prayer that as a reward for her obedience he will go on writing to her, not in the style of a friend but of a lover.

Greville had got rid of her. Oddly enough, he never appears to have realised what a fool he was. At any rate, he had saved his collection of minerals.

So Emma became the mistress of Sir William Hamilton. She was never to love him as she had loved Greville. Indeed, she was never to love like that again ; but before many months had passed, she confessed to an extreme fondness for her new possessor, probably assuring herself that this was the real and the better love.

Her eyes, too, were now wide open to her surroundings, to the happiness that was pressed upon her. She became enamoured of Naples, and Naples of her. Learning French and Italian with native facility, she did not betray so readily her want of education. Not that this would have troubled the Italians. The Italy of those days was the Italy of the serenade, the tarantella, and the vendetta, not the prim, puritanical, over-disciplined country we know to-day. It was, indeed, "the South, the land of passion," which abundantly fulfilled the northerner's fondest dreams. The English girl whom His Britannic Majesty's ambassador did not hesitate to place at the head of his table, was the most beautiful thing God had made—that was enough for Neapolitan society. She dined with the nuns of Santa Romita "in full assembly," and by one of them, a member of the tremendously aristocratic Acquaviva family, was kissed, fondled, and complimented. Nor were the distinguished foreigners who trooped to the southern capital in the least censorious. The Duke of Gloucester, her own king's brother,

sought an introduction to her ; the lovely Duchess of Argyll, formerly Miss Gunning, made much of her ; Prince Dietrichstein, of the Imperial court, offered himself as *cavalier servente*. Goethe met her and witnessed those tableaux or “attitudes” in which she posed for the delight of the ambassador’s circle. “She is,” he writes, “surpassingly beautiful and finely made. She wears a Grecian garb which suits her admirably. She effects changes of posture, mood, gesture, and manner, in surprising variety, expressing all that painters have tried vainly to fix and portray.” But with true insight, he perceived her body to be more beautiful than her mind. She lacked *Geist*.

Conscious of the hushed homage of her exalted audience, the blacksmith’s daughter must have remembered those other posings as the Goddess Hygeia in the medical mountebank’s show. Did she still sigh for the little house on Paddington Green, or for the little child she had vowed to protect ? She does not say so, so far as I have noticed, in the long breathless letters which she continued, strangely, as some may think, to address to Greville. It must have given her a bitter pleasure to recount her triumphs, to paint her actual splendour, to the man by whom she had been so lightly prized. But the unruffled sage only congratulated himself the more on having done so well for her, and foreseeing an end to her grandeur, urged on his uncle all the more strongly the propriety of making a permanent settlement upon her.

A settlement Sir William was to make, but of a vastly different kind. He was a wiser, a better, and emotionally a younger man than his nephew. He knew that in Emma he had found real happiness. He did not propose to throw that happiness away. It may be supposed that he was aware of the danger he ran from younger and equally high-placed

rivals. Perhaps, too, it pleased him to think of dishing his shrewd worldly-wise junior, whose designs he must have penetrated. It would be a good joke to marry the woman who had been sent him as a buffer against marriage; but even in that latitudinarian age and clime he might well hesitate. The Duchess of Argyll, it is said, promised to present the thing in a favourable light at the English court. That delightful prelate, Lord Bristol, Bishop of Derry, was all in favour of it. But what perhaps determined the step was the attitude of the court to which Hamilton was accredited.

The throne of the Two Sicilies was then occupied by Ferdinand IV, affectionately surnamed Nosey (*Nasone*) by his subjects—a coarse, brutish man, rather a King Cole turned tyrant, with a passion, like most princes, for slaughtering animals. His wife, the famous Maria Carolina, the sister of Marie Antoinette, was a domineering, vehement woman, already much preoccupied with the trend of events in France and the spread of anti-monarchical ideas. She knew, of course, all about Hamilton's mistress, and having had lovers herself, found it possible to commend her decorum and fidelity. Ferdinand, also, had his eye on the lovely foreigner. The story goes (and it is fairly well attested) that one day Emma was accosted in the public gardens by a man whom she recognized as the King. Feigning confusion or indignation, she refused to enter into conversation, and so perhaps deliberately goaded the indiscreet gallant into scribbling a note which he pressed into her palm. Promptly she craved an audience of the Queen. She was being shamelessly entreated, she complained with a great show of distress, by one of the King's subjects, and implored Her Majesty's protection. On being asked if she could name her persecutor, she produced the note. What Maria Carolina said to her

husband is not recorded. But in consequence of this episode or on general grounds of propriety, the Queen is said to have recommended the English ambassador to make his virtuous mistress his wife.

Thus a shabby ruse, by which Emma probably merely intended to force herself upon the notice of royalty, resulted in her promotion. In 1791, Sir William took her back with him on a visit to England. Greville, not yet scenting his uncle's design, hoped that they would not openly live together in view of the British public. But on their arrival, they were entertained by the quality, among others by Alderman Beckford at Fonthill, as if they were already man and wife. We are told of Emma's delight in visiting old friends—of visits paid to Romney and Hayley, even to little Emma. One wonders whether Sir William knew of that child's existence, when, having obtained George III's permission, he married his mistress on September 6th, 1791, at Marylebone Church.

It is better to be born beautiful than rich, one imagines good old "Mrs. Cadogan" saying. For the first time, the Honourable Charles's confidence in his own sagacity must have been shaken. Yet in this case worldly wisdom was in the end justified of her children, for he was to remain his uncle's heir.

II

The ambassador took his wife back to Naples, stopping at Paris to present her to Marie Antoinette. Queen Charlotte would not receive her. The Queen of the Two Sicilies promptly accepted her, and presently began to show her marked signs of favour. "I have been presented to the

Queen of Naples by her own desire," writes Emma to Romney on April 17th, 1792; "she has shown me all sorts of kind and affectionate attentions." It has been suggested that Lady Hamilton was a spy of Pitt's, and deliberately wormed herself into the Queen's confidence. This she did, one scandal makes out, by spying on the loose-living King and reporting his amours. Others opine that the Queen set out to gain the English ambassador's wife in order that she might gain England. I do not think this remarkable friendship was dictated by policy on either side. Emma was an eminently attractive and lovable young woman; dazzled by the first marks of royal condescension, she would naturally respond by demonstrations of admiration and devotion. Despotic princes and princesses have always had a fancy for lowly born favourites. Emma had no affiliations with other courts or with any Neapolitan faction, no particular principles. Maria Carolina may well have seen in her the ideal minion. Before long she was riding one of the horses from the royal stables, attended by a royal equerry.

And now the blacksmith's daughter, the ex-servant girl, who had passed from one man to another, whose one aim in life had been to find a kind protector, found herself concerned in the affairs of the nations. The lover of Théroigne, we know, complained that she had a soul above her condition. We hear no such complaints from Fetherstonehaugh or Greville or Hamilton about their mistress. It was not any magnanimity of soul, any sense of sympathy with mankind, which drew Emma into politics and made her a figure in history. Married—and very happily married, as she repeatedly and earnestly informs her correspondents—to a diplomatist, she began to interest herself in his business as she would have done if he had been a shopkeeper. Sir William,

getting on in years, lazy, and more concerned for the things of Ancient Pompeii than of Modern Naples, was glad of her help. Emma became increasingly aware of the French Revolution. She viewed it entirely from the standpoint of a partisan. Liberty, democracy, the people, were merely words to her. It was a gentleman who had first lifted her out of the kitchen; in gentlemen she had always found protectors, and, unlike Théroigne, she did not resent that protection. Now she was the wife of a king's envoy, and the favoured friend of a queen. Enthusiastically, whole-heartedly, she embraced the queen's cause, and raved against the Reds like any lady-Fascist of 1927. It wasn't principle, but it was loyalty. The Queen, she assured her old friend Greville, was the best mother, wife, and friend in the world. “I live constantly with her, and have done so intimately for two years, and I have never in all that time seen anything but goodness and sincerity in her, and if ever you hear any lies about her contradict them, and if you should see a cursed book, written by a vile French dog, with her character in it, don't believe a word. No person could be more charming than the Queen. If I was her daughter she could not be kinder to me, and I love her with my whole soul.”

By “the vile French dogs” and millions of Italians, the sister of Marie Antoinette was regarded as a new Frédégonde, as a new Jezebel, as malice incarnate. “If shades by carnage be appeased,” Marie Antoinette might have been well satisfied by the Liberal heads that fell just then in Naples. Maria Carolina, more than her husband, was the instigator of the white terror. While Bonaparte was driving the Austrians before him out of Northern Italy, the rulers of the Two Sicilies prepared for the coming attack by an endeavour to exterminate any potential foe in their own stronghold.

“Emma’s own heart was tender to a fault. She detested bloodshed, and liked to use her influence for mercy.” This is Mr. Sichel’s claim for his heroine, but he fails to substantiate it. Till her marriage, roughly speaking, her situation had been continuously an anxious one. She was certainly much more preoccupied with her own troubles than other people’s. At thirty, what pity she was capable of would have been reserved for animals and for troubles like her own. Of the ideals which inspired the revolutionaries, she could not have formed the vaguest comprehension. All who wished to disturb the society which had been so kind to Emma Lyon, she looked on as vile monsters. In a letter brought to light by Mr. Sichel himself, she deploras the liberation of the Jacobins after suffering four years’ imprisonment, adding : “they all deserved to be hanged long ago.” I cannot find a shred of evidence that she was in the least shocked or distressed by the barbarity of her Bourbon patrons.

She was their creature. She was no English patriot. Throughout her life Emma Hamilton responded only to personal impulses and motives. In her own country she must have felt a pariah ; she knew nothing, saw nothing of public affairs. King George probably she had never seen ; by his consort she was snubbed. But Naples took her to its heart, the Queen of Naples folded her arms about her and called her beloved. In aiding and abetting Maria Carolina to get the help of England against France, she was consulting first of all the interests of her mistress and her adopted country, not the interests of England.

Whether she did indeed render a service to her own government, as she afterwards maintained, by getting hold of and forwarding at her considerable personal expense to London, a despatch announcing that Spain was coming into the war



SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON
(After the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds)

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on the side of France, is a question full of difficulty, not likely to be solved. It has not been suggested, so far by her admirers, that it was she who kept their Sicilian majesties from following the example of the other Bourbon monarchy; though all this time “Emma is never from Maria Carolina’s side; writing to her, urging, praising, heartening, caressing the English.” The Revolution had spent its fury, and Ferdinand was not without hopes of conciliating the French. But Maria Carolina pinned her faith to England, and on June 16th, 1798, to her immense delight, a British squadron was signalled off Ischia.

It was commanded by Nelson, on his way to Egypt.

Emma had met him five years before, when he visited Naples on a special mission from Lord Hood, then before Toulon. He spoke of her then as a young woman of amiable manners, who did honour to her station. At that time she was very much devoted to her husband. Writing to the Admiral on this occasion, “I will not say how glad I shall be to see you. Indeed, I cannot describe to you my feelings on your being so near us”—she may have been deluding herself that she had fallen in love with him at the first meeting, or been expressing the satisfaction felt by the Queen and the whole pro-British faction. Nelson sailed away this time without seeing her, but not as he and she afterwards insisted, without her rendering a signal service to him and to Britain. A treaty with France forbade the Neapolitans to receive more than four British frigates at any one time into any of their harbours. Hamilton, reporting to the Foreign Office, says he prevailed on Acton, the King’s minister, to write an order in the name of his Sicilian majesty, directing the governors of all the ports in Sicily to supply the British ships with all sorts of provisions, and, in case of an action, to permit the

British sick and wounded to be landed and taken care of. But Nelson, in the famous codicil, states : " The British fleet under my command could never have returned to Egypt a second time had not Lady Hamilton's influence with the Queen of Naples caused letters to be wrote to the Governor of Syracuse, that he was to encourage the fleet to be supplied with everything, should they put into any port in Sicily. We put into Syracuse, and received every supply ; went to Egypt and destroyed the French fleet. Could I have rewarded these services, I would not now call upon my country." The Queen's promise to send these orders is supposed to be referred to in this letter sent by Emma to Nelson on June 17th : " Sir,—I send you a letter I have received this moment from the Queen. Kiss it and send it back by Bowen, as I am bound not to give any of her letters." To this the Admiral replied : " My dear Lady Hamilton,—I have kissed the Queen's letter. Pray say I hope for the honour of kissing her hand when no fears will intervene, assure her majesty that no person more than myself has her felicity at heart, and that the sufferings of her family will be a Tower of Strength on the day of Battle, fear not the event, God is with us. God bless you and Sir William, pray say I cannot stay to answer his letter. Ever yours faithfully, HORATIO NELSON."

If it be asked what further promise the Admiral wanted than that given by Acton, it is answered that the port authorities would not have given full effect to it without precise commands from the throne. But most people will think that Hamilton's despatch conflicts with Nelson's and Emma's long-subsequent statements.

The news of the Battle of the Nile reached Naples on September 1st, a month after the event. Lady Hamilton wrote a week later to the victor, telling him that her adorable

Queen and the Neapolitans generally were delirious with joy. As for herself, she fainted when she heard the great news. . . .

She fainted again when, on September 22nd, she came face to face with him aboard the *Vanguard*. Nelson describes the scene in a letter to his wife: "Alongside came my honoured friends. Up flew her ladyship, and exclaiming, 'O God! Is it possible?' she fell into my arm more dead than alive. Tears, however, soon set matters right; when alongside came the King. The scene was in its way as interesting. He took me by the hand, calling me his 'Deliverer and Preserver,' with every other expression of kindness. In short, all Naples calls me '*Nostro Liberatore*.' My greeting from the lower classes was truly affecting. I hope some day to have the pleasure of introducing you to Lady Hamilton; she is one of the very best women in the world, she is an honour to her sex. Her kindness, with Sir William's to me, is more than I can express. I am in their house, and I may tell you it required all the kindness of my friends to set me up."

Emma's exclamation was probably mere gush, but it might have been provoked by the change in the hero's appearance since she had last seen him. He had lost an eye and an arm. But Emma was changed even more, at least, since Greville had sacrificed her to save his collection of minerals. The easy-going life of Naples and the heavy feeding of Ferdinand's court had had its effect. She had become definitely fat. Nelson's Emma was not the girl that Romney drew. It is worth noting, this, that the most passionate and enduring love she ever inspired began when her beauty had coarsened or departed. The Honourable Charles would have disdained the overblown rose that Nelson plucked.

That love certainly dates from the twenty-three days which

the sailor spent ashore, though he was so far unaware of it. In all Emma's previous loves there had been a canine quality—the clinging fondness of the waif for its protector. But in 1798, Emma Hamilton was in her thirty-fourth year (quite a middle-aged woman for those days), seven years the wife of a diplomatist, accustomed to the society of the great, bestowing, not needing protection. Her interest in the great Admiral began as a sort of hero-worship. It was the age of gush, and no doubt she and Maria Carolina found pleasure vying with each other to praise and sentimentalize over the enemy of the French. Propinquity and the man's own disposition did the rest. Her husband was nearing seventy. Since her marriage she had not had a lover, there is reason to believe. But she had now reached the stage when so many women experience an Indian summer and quite deliberately look out for an affair. The rôle of second fiddle to the "adorable queen" could hardly content her. Of royal mistresses, she must have heard and seen a good deal by now. To be the mistress of Nelson, she was lofty enough to perceive, would be a nobler rôle. Added to which, of course, she could best serve her royal friend by mastering the Master of the Seas.

The task was an easier one than she perhaps expected. Most people know by this time that the "Great Men" of history are very often the weakest. There was nothing of the strong silent man about Henry II, Henri Quatre, or Frederick the Great, least of all about Horatio Nelson, whom a naval historian¹ calls the least English of great Englishmen. In point of fact, his failings are as common among the English as among other people. He hated his adversaries, and spoke insultingly of them like any Fleet Street warmonger. With

¹ David Hannay in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

evident gusto, he describes himself taking the swords of all the Spanish officers after a victory and handing them as rapidly to his attendant barge-master. To the Danes alone among his foes did he conduct himself with courtesy and magnanimity. The son of a simple-minded country parson, he was indifferently educated, and could not speak any language but his own. He had no more breadth of vision than Emma herself. He was theatrical, hysterical, greedy of applause. He was not lustful, but sensually sentimental. His commanders knew of his tendency to fall in love at every port. Utter want of discrimination may have betrayed him into his marriage with a widow ; but he appears to have continued reasonably fond of her till he met Emma. There is no ground for representing Nelson at this time as a consciously unhappy, disillusioned husband, or for throwing the blame for what followed on his wife.

The absent woman was, of course, no match for one who had graduated as a courtesan, and had not forgotten how to practise on men's foibles and passions. Emma was making love to him while they discussed affairs of State. "I told Her Majesty," she writes, "we only wanted Lady Nelson to be the female *Tria juncta in uno*, for we all love you, and yet all differently, and yet all equally." But Nelson, when he left for Malta, had only got as far (on paper) as avowing his honour and respect for her and her husband, and subscribing himself as her ever faithful and affectionate Nelson.

Sir William, he declared, was a man after his own heart, and Sir William returned his liking. Still, Emma, not the ambassador, was the Admiral's intermediary with the court of Naples. By now she had thoroughly inoculated him with her own affection for these unpleasant royalties, or at least

for the Queen. From now onwards till his leaving the Mediterranean, Nelson showed a livelier interest in the affairs of their country than in England's. Writing to Emma in October, he predicted that a Neapolitan republic would be set up unless Ferdinand anticipated the inevitable attack by the French, and at the same time he warned her that the royal family must be prepared for flight. Against that contingency, he would hold his ships ready. As a British admiral, he was "anxious to approve himself a faithful servant to his Sovereign by doing everything in his power for the happiness and dignity of their Sicilian majesties and their kingdom."

Ferdinand, who in concert with Austria, had decided on war as far back as July, was thus egged on to attack the nearest French troops, then occupying Rome. He was badly defeated and returned to his capital. We do not hear that he reproached Nelson for his bad counsel—he was only too anxious to take refuge on board the English ships. Lady Hamilton lived to boast of her part in this inglorious evacuation.¹ The enemy was still many miles away, hardly a tremor of revolt had been felt in the city. The only danger, she admits, was from the loyal populace who objected to their King's departure. The Queen was the only person involved who had the wit to appreciate the ignominy of the flight. "Saved, but ruined and dishonoured," she wrote. "A deputation of magistrates came on board and implored the King to remain among his people. He was inflexible, and every effort to move him proved unavailing." Heroic monarch! It is evident that Emma looked on herself as not less heroic, while Nelson seems to have regarded the Bourbon's

¹ Maria Carolina does not mention her in her letters to the Marquis li Galla, describing the flight of the royal family.—Welschinger, *Correspondance inédite*.

abandonment of his capital as the not unsatisfactory upshot of his aggressive policy.

It is hard to believe, however, that the wretched royalties could refrain from cursing Nelson and all his counsels during the horrors of that stormy passage to Palermo. Emma turned out a first-class sailor ; so did her mother—for “ Mrs. Cadogan,” it should be said, had been living all this time at Naples, giving her own tea-parties, and on the friendliest terms with their majesties. Indeed, King Ferdinand on this occasion, between frequent and violent reachings, was heard to declare that she was an angel. Sir William sat with a loaded pistol in his hand, ready to anticipate drowning. At last, on Christmas Day, 1798, the august runaways were landed at Palermo, and were greeted with kindness but without enthusiasm. A month later the republic was proclaimed in the capital which they had abandoned.

The person who suffered most by this ignominious retreat was Hamilton. Acting presumably upon Nelson’s advice, he had packed up his collections and shipped them to England aboard the *Colossus*. He was now to learn that the ship was wrecked and his treasure lost. He assessed its value at thirty thousand pounds. “ I am worn out,” he complained, “ and want repose.”

His fatigue left Emma more time for Nelson. Sichel speaks of the two listening, disguised, to the talk of Sicilian taverns—an undignified occupation for a British admiral. Emma is said to have dressed as a midshipman, a uniform for which her girth would hardly have fitted her. Romney painted her as Circe ; just now she was certainly playing the part of Calypso. Nelson could not draw himself away from her. It was easy for her to persuade him and for him to persuade himself that his first duty was to restore the King of the Two

Sicilies to his kingdom. The excuses he offered his commander-in-chief, Lord St. Vincent, for remaining in Sicily have not convinced every naval historian. Hannay describes him as unhinged by excitement at this period. With his anti-Jacobin fever, he infected his subordinates. English sea-captains devoted themselves to extirpating republicanism in Neapolitan islands. Troubridge distinguished himself by his ferocity, and apologized to his commander for not sending him a Jacobin's head on account of the hot weather.

The monarchical reaction began to make itself felt as summer drew on. On June 13th, 1799, the royalist troops commanded by Cardinal Ruffo, with whom was a Russian detachment, defeated the Republicans and entered Naples. The small French garrison under Méjean held out in the citadel of Sant' Elmo, the Republicans in the Castel Nuovo and the Castel dell' Uovo on the sea shore. The French from their perch threatened the city with a bombardment. Ruffo was a humane man, and to spare further bloodshed and to save the defeated revolutionaries from the ire of his own followers, he concluded an armistice and a convention, under the terms of which the garrisons were to march out with the honours of war and be transported by sea to Toulon.

Wind of these negotiations reached Palermo. Ferdinand was resolved that his rebellious subjects should not escape his vengeance ; his wife had looked forward to their destruction as the choicest sweet of victory. In Nelson they knew they had a willing and zealous agent, pitiless and ungenerous as themselves. He sailed at once for Naples, aboard the *Foudroyant*, taking the Hamiltons with him. Upon his arrival he, who had contributed in no way whatever to the victory, butted in between the conquerer and the conquered. In the discreditable transactions that followed, Emma claims

to have taken an active part as interpreter. She was there, perhaps, as the mouthpiece of Maria Carolina, who told Nelson to treat Naples as he would treat a rebel town in Ireland. Summoning Ruffo, the Admiral informed him that he was come to tear up the Convention. Indignantly, the churchman pointed out that it had been signed, not only by him, but by Captain Foote on behalf of Britain and by Chevalier Micheroux on behalf of Russia. Rather than have his signature dishonoured, he would prefer to denounce the treaty and open fire against the forts. To that Nelson might with honour have agreed. Instead, both he and Hamilton declared that he would do nothing to interrupt the armistice. A copy exists of a despatch dated June 25th, 1799¹, in which Nelson warns the revolutionaries that he will not abide by the capitulation, and that they must throw themselves upon their King's mercy. Was this notice received by the Republicans? They surrendered; but they surrendered, as they maintained in a protest addressed to the British commander, under the convention, the Russian troops rendering them the honours of war as they marched out of the forts, in accordance with the articles, notwithstanding which, on reaching the boats provided for their reception, they were made prisoners by the British, and informed that they were considered to have surrendered unconditionally. It is noteworthy that Nelson in reply to the protest, merely referred them to their King—he did not remind them of his despatch, according to which they had no ground for protest at all.

Whether Nelson acted with good or bad faith on this melancholy occasion, it cannot be denied that he was animated with blood-lust. He wanted the Jacobins' heads, and there was very soon a rich harvest of them. A few days later, he

¹ Laughton. *Nelson's Letters and Despatches*.

gratified himself by hanging the Neapolitan admiral, Caracciolo, at the yard-arm. Emma was with him. She missed the chance of making herself glorious in history by staying the arm of vengeance. Her "adorable queen," who even now did not dare show her detested face in Naples, had no need to warn her against the promptings of her "benevolent heart." The woman who had formerly bowed to the will of God and Greville now acquiesced meekly in the doings of Nelson and the Devil.

In the first fortnight of August, Emma was back at Palermo—of course, in Nelson's train. He needed her help and sympathy at this juncture. "Do not," he wrote to Lord Spencer, "let the Admiralty write harshly to me—my generous soul cannot bear it, conscious that it is entirely unmerited." His beloved tyrants were not proving grateful, and were backward in forwarding supplies to beleaguered Malta. Deputies from the island tugged at Emma's skirts and sought her intercession. When the French ships in the harbour of Valetta at last surrendered, Nelson took the Hamiltons with him to witness his triumph. It was in the course of this voyage to Malta, aboard the *Foudroyant*, that Emma is commonly believed to have given herself to her hero. It is likely, however, that she had become his mistress much earlier. Sir William must have known, and never minded very much. Throughout the rest of his life he remained the warm friend and admirer of his wife's paramour. From profound study of classic lore, he had imbibed the philosophy of a Cato. If his wife had presented him with a child by the hero, I daresay he would gladly have passed it off as his own. From studying antiquities, he said, he had learnt the perpetual fluctuation of everything, and that the present hour was the sweetest in life. "Do all the good you can upon earth, and



MARIA CAROLINA, QUEEN OF THE TWO SICILIES

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take the chance of eternity without dismay." Emma continued to care for her old husband, as women who take lovers constantly do. Neither of them had Nelson's capacity for hypocrisy, or, if you like, self-deception. He, a devout believer in the religion and ethics taught by his father, the Norfolk parson, was for ever invoking God's name in his love letters to his mistress and seemed to think his adultery had a sort of divine sanction.

It was this very attitude of mind which enabled him to parade his love for the ambassador's wife before the world. The thing had become known before the curious trio turned their faces from the easy-going South, in July, 1800, *en route* for the more censorious North. Nelson had handed over his command; Hamilton, after a quarter of a century's stay at Naples, had received his letters of recall. Maria Carolina, who had lost what little influence she ever had over her husband, went with them as far as her native city, Vienna. For the route lay overland. Her Majesty's influence was enough to secure Lady Hamilton a cordial welcome at the Austrian court. Parting with her, as it proved for the last time, the Queen vowed that her Emma, her dear Emma, would be for ever her friend and sister, that she would never forget her. That triumphal reception at Vienna marks the high-water mark of Lady Hamilton's success. No more was she to be the tool and the pet of queens.

At Dresden their reception was distinctly colder. Unroyal Hamburg, where they embarked for England, was enthusiastic. The impression the party made on the English people encountered on the way was most unfavourable. "Lady Hamilton," says one eye-witness, "is, without exception, the most coarse, ill-mannered, disagreeable woman we ever met." She had, admits a strongly sympathetic

biographer, threatened to knock down the Elector of Saxony if he frowned upon her. "The Nelsonians" appeared to other observers like a troupe of strolling players; Sir William, to prove his nimbleness (he had been the best dancer at the Neapolitan court) hopped on his backbone, his legs, his ribbon, and his star (the insignia, these last, of the Order of the Bath), all flying about in the air; Mrs. Cadogan, who was "what one would expect," as soon as they got on board, busied herself preparing the Irish stew for which her daughter clamoured. What is much more damaging, Lady Hamilton is reported by Lord Fitzharris to have gambled heavily with Nelson's money; a charge to which remonstrances addressed to her by Troubridge in Sicily give some colour, and which was to be repeated. A woman with Emma Hamilton's early training would naturally make free with her lover's money. It is the courtesan's vice.

III

The conquering hero of the Nile landed at Yarmouth on November 6th, 1800. Amid such scenes of enthusiasm as satisfied even his vanity, he travelled to London and put up at a hotel—together with Sir William and Lady Hamilton. Next day came his triumphant procession to the City, where he was feasted by the Lord Mayor—together with Sir William and Lady Hamilton. Nelson's wife (the hackneyed *cliché* is apt on this occasion) was conspicuous by her absence. There was a stormy interview . . . it was plain that her ladyship was not going to show the accommodating temper of Sir William. In vain was she invited to make a quartette. She withdrew. Settlements were made. "At Bath, or London, she sulked and hugged her grievance, her virtue, her money,

and her rank." The case which his apologists try to make against Lady Nelson is thin. "She was not the helpmeet for a hero"—but he had won the battle of the Nile before he found this out; "she failed in the temperament that understands temperament, and the spirit that answers and applauds"—it is true enough that she did not sufficiently flatter his vanity, and that by playing on his vanity the other woman won him away from her. It is imputed to her as a proof of vindictiveness that she never resorted to the clumsy procedure of that day for a divorce; but such proceedings in George III's time might have impaired the popularity even of Nelson.

As it was, he was frowned upon at Court and at the Admiralty. The Government would have done without him if they dared. To posterity which remembers Nelson as the victor of Trafalgar this seems preposterous. Had he survived that victory, it might not have seemed so. The victor of Waterloo lived long enough to see the necessity of putting iron bars before the windows of Apsley House.

Emma did not worry about Lady Nelson. She even used articles of her wardrobe at her lover's bidding. Nelson's family rallied round the mistress and laughed at the wife. The Hamiltons made a home for themselves at 23 Piccadilly, facing the Green Park. In a rare fit of querulousness, Sir William some time this year (1801) complained that his wife devoted all her time to Nelson and turned his house into an inn. He was soon talked over.

While actually under her husband's roof, Emma is said to have given birth to Nelson's child, Horatia. The infant, born about January 29th, was taken by Emma, unattended, in a cab to a nurse; by another account, it was concealed in her muff. To the day of her death, Horatia would not

believe herself to be Lady Hamilton's daughter, though she believed Nelson to be her father. I have seen it stated that she thought the Queen of Naples was her mother. There is certainly rather strong ground for supposing that she was the child of none of these, but was foisted on Nelson in order to rivet him more firmly to his enchantress. It is hardly credible that a woman could bear a child in her husband's house without his being aware of it; a Mrs. FitzGeorge, moreover, testifies to having seen Emma going through her "attitudes" at Dresden only three months before, when there was nothing in her appearance to indicate pregnancy. If Emma had been in that condition, it is astonishing that she should so superfluously have exposed her figure to sustained and intensive observation. No resemblance was traced in Horatia to either of her reputed parents. That Emma should not have proclaimed her to be her daughter is not, of course, to be wondered at; but Horatia in old age (she lived to be eighty) asks us whether she would have dared to have her under her own roof (as she presently did), if she had been her child, and declares that she implored her on her death-bed without success to tell her who her mother was.

Nelson, at any rate, believed this to be his child and Emma's, and was overjoyed at her birth. In his correspondence with his mistress before and after the event, the girl is referred to as the child of a "Mr. and Mrs. Thomson," whose interests the Admiral has much at heart. His love for Horatia is one of his most lovable traits. He gave "Mrs. Thomson's child" as a toast to his captains, Hardy and Troubridge. To Emma, he wrote: "I never did love anyone else. I never had a dear pledge of love till you gave me one, and you, thank God, never gave one to any one else." He had never been told of "little Emma," then nineteen years old.

Something of her past she had told him. Writing under date March 6th, 1801, he says : “ I worship—nay, adore you—and if you was single and I found you under a hedge, I would instantly marry you. Sir William has a treasure, and does he want to throw it away ? That other chap did throw away the most precious jewel that God Almighty ever sent on this earth.” The other chap was presumably Greville or Willet-Payne, with both of whom, by the way, Emma was on friendly terms. Sir William was risking his treasure by asking her to receive the Prince of Wales. Nelson was beside himself with jealousy, and praises his mistress for her incomparable virtue and steadfastness in refusing.

It was to preserve her, I suspect, from such temptations that soon after the battle of Copenhagen he bought the estate at Merton, and invited the Hamiltons to use it as their own. “ Mrs. Cadogan ” was, as always, included in the offer of unlimited hospitality. The smith’s widow had won the Admiral’s heart as she had won Greville’s and Hamilton’s and the Neapolitan majesties’. Evidently, Emma inherited her unaccountable power of fascination from this homely peasant woman. Lord Minto, a visitor, describes Lady Hamilton at this time as “ in high looks, but more immense than ever. She goes on cramming Nelson with trowelfuls of flattery which he goes on taking as quietly as a child does pap. The love she makes him is not only ridiculous, but disgusting. Not only the rooms, but the whole house, staircase and all, are covered with nothing but pictures of her and him, of all sizes and sorts, and representations of his naval actions, coats of arms, pieces of plate in his honour, the flagstaff of *L’Orient*, etc., an excess of vanity which counteracts its own purpose. If it was Lady H.’s house, there might be a pretence for it. To make his own a mere looking-glass to view himself all

day is bad taste. Braham, the celebrated Jew singer, performed with Lady H. She is horrid, but he entertained me in spite of her. Emma, in the sadly ironical catchword of to-day, had given Nelson a "home fit for a hero to live in."

Not satisfied with "the trowelfuls of flattery," Nelson led the circus on a starring tour through the West Country. They were reinforced, strange to say, by Greville ! Hamilton got sick of it. He had even gone so far as to suggest an amicable separation. But he was "exceedingly glad to give every satisfaction to their best friend, Lord Nelson." "Let us bear and forbear, for God's sake," he wrote in answer, it may be assumed, to some kind friend who wanted to open his eyes.

On April 6th, 1803, the kindly scholar closed them for ever at his house in Piccadilly. "Our dear Sir William," writes Nelson, "died this morning in Lady Hamilton's and my arms without a sign or a struggle. Poor Lady H. is, as you may expect, desolate. I hope she will be left properly, but I doubt."

Emma grieved sincerely for the husband who had been so kind to her ; but she did not grieve, it is asserted, very long. Her lover's doubt was justified. Hamilton's estates went, after all, to Greville ; to Emma he left eight hundred pounds a year, and a hundred a year to Mrs. Cadogan should she survive her daughter. The unpaid remainder of her debts, amounting to four hundred and fifty pounds, he left as a charge against the Government, which he claimed owed him heavy arrears of pension. To Nelson he bequeathed a cameo of Emma "as a very small token of the great regard he had for his lordship, the most virtuous, loyal, and truly brave character I have ever met with." Was there, after all, some deep irony in this ?

While keeping up a small town house in Clarges Street, the widow lived mainly at Merton. Nelson allowed her a hundred a month. Now her husband was dead, Emma could have little Horatia with her. The child was baptized "Horatia Nelson Thomson." Her introduction was covered by a curious letter, in which Nelson explains her as having been confided to his care and protection while in Italy¹. The same extravagant slovenly bohemian life went on at Merton. Nelson's brothers and sisters and nephews and nieces, and her cousins and second cousins, swarmed round the place and were all on excellent terms with Emma. But the Admiral, once more at sea, thought of Merton as paradise, addresses his mistress in idolatrous terms, and makes of her and the adored child a sacred trinity with his country. A second daughter, born in February, 1804, died in the following summer.

The lovers had a last three weeks together in 1805 ; in the morning of September 13th, having knelt down in their bedroom and invoked God's blessing on mother and child, Nelson drove away down the Portsmouth road. Everyone knows the story of his heroic death—how with his dying breath on the fatal and glorious October 21st, he whispered : "Remember that I leave Lady Hamilton and my daughter to my country."

The tenour of his last wishes had already leaked out when Emma, who had been prostrated by grief, rose from her bed. Life, she declared, was no longer worth living. "I lived but for him. His glory I gloried in. It was my pride that he should go forth." Every word so far is to be believed ; but—"this last and fatal time he went, I persuaded him to it" . . . ? It is fair to her contemporaries to say as much

¹ Hence, I suppose, Horatia's suspicion that she was a queen's daughter.

sympathy was expressed for her as if she had been the hero's lawful widow. Yet neither the woman to whom he had been linked by love, nor the woman to whom he had been linked by law, showed her face when Nelson was buried by a mourning nation beneath the dome of St. Paul's.

Both women began to press their claims upon those in power. Lady Nelson was not satisfied with the two thousand a year she was to receive as pension. She might well consider herself unfairly treated when the nation gave ninety thousand and an annuity of five thousand and an earldom to Nelson's clergyman brother, who had had less share in contributing to the victory of Trafalgar than the meanest clerk in the navy victualling yard. The government of George III, in fact, behaved like the worthy elders who give the good little boy not what he would like for a present but what they think suitable. In face of such an attitude, it was obvious that Nelson's own last wishes would receive scant attention. Little Horatia was empowered by royal licence to take the name of Nelson as the Admiral had directed in his last codicil. Otherwise, his legacy to the nation was disregarded. For Emma, though she renewed her suit year after year with minister after minister, got nothing from the country. The codicil in Nelson's own hand, which may be seen in the Painted Hall at Greenwich, is a draft which England has never honoured.

Whether by this generation the claims of a great man's mistress and her illegitimate child would have got fuller recognition may be very seriously questioned. It is not so many years since the head of the Irish party, with the full approval of English statesmen, was dethroned and cast out of public life because of his love for another man's wife. My own view is that the State having resolved to show its



NELSON AS VICE-ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE
(After the painting by J. Hoppner)

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gratitude to a dead man, should have shown it in the way he desired and to the person he designated, without enquiry or regard to that person's merits or standing. The British government of the day put itself in the wrong by its illogical and uncalled-for liberality to the wrong people. But then poor Emma and her indiscreet partisans supplied it with a defence by pleading not only the hero's last wishes but her own services. Specifically, she claimed to have warned the Foreign Office of Spain's entrance into the war on the side of France in 1796, to have enabled Nelson to water his ships in the Sicilian harbours, and to have successfully managed the retreat of the Bourbons from Naples. The first and second claims were and continue to be disputed—Nelson's own testimony on his mistress's behalf as regards the second is what might be expected of a man besottedly in love and carries no weight; as regards the third, the memorialist was still unable to realise, like Nelson himself, that services to the tyrants of Naples were not necessarily services to England. This was made clearer, perhaps, to ministers by the letter which Maria Carolina had written, somewhat reluctantly, in support of Emma's claims, upon the death of Sir William Hamilton. On the gratitude of England, Emma Hamilton had no claim whatever. Our government's contempt of Nelson's last wish is another and a serious matter. Positively disgraceful and iniquitous was its neglect of the child whom with his last breath he declared to be his. If anybody should have got a peerage and ninety thousand pounds out of Trafalgar, it should have been the victor's daughter, and not her putative mother or utterly irrelevant uncle.

Earl Nelson, bitterly complained Emma, never gave the dear Horatia a frock or a sixpence. Emma's income in the year following Trafalgar has been estimated at £1200 per

annum. To this should have been added another £450 bequeathed by Nelson but held up on various pretexts from year to year by his brother. Merton was sold. But for one so improvident and fond of gambling as Emma, her income soon proved inadequate. For the first time since childhood she had no man to look after her. Now, as always, she was sponged upon by her kinsfolk, by Kidds and Connors, and by any wastrel who could appeal to her compassion through her dead hero. Always reckoning on a wonderful windfall from the obdurate Treasury, she sank deeper and deeper into debt. Again and again her friends and Nelson's got together, paid her debts, and set her on her feet. Greville, even Fetherstonehaugh, her old "betrayer," busied themselves on her behalf. One whose ingratitude must have bitten shrewdly was the "adorable queen," Maria Carolina, faithless like most of the royal brood. She did nothing to help. What use was the Englishwoman to her now?

Emma tried hard to awaken public sympathy. She made a point of going to hear Braham sing "The Death of Nelson," and fainted loudly every time. But her luck had changed. Everything went wrong. Her old friend, the Duke of Queensberry ("Old Q") died, leaving her five hundred a year, but the will was disputed and she did not live long enough to get a penny. In 1810, worst of all, she lost the old mother. Emma, always more filial than maternal, seems not to have found consolation for the loss in her children. In this year, her unacknowledged daughter took leave of her for ever; though now, it could have done little harm to the widow to acknowledge her, at least as a niece or cousin. Nine-year-old Horatia, she nagged and chided. Three years later, we find her upbraiding the fatherless child for her ingratitude, her nonsensical follies, her turbulent passions! Witnesses should

be summoned to prove that she had not used Horatia ill. It was time to send her to school.

The young girl would have been happier at school. She was dragged from one lodging to another, even at last with her mother into the Rules of the King's Bench. They were released by the exertions of their still numerous and generous friends. Then came another and a bad blow. Many of Lady Hamilton's most intimate letters to Nelson had been stolen and were now published. Among them were the “Thomson” letters relating to Horatia's birth, which not only must have rekindled the girl's curiosity about her origin, but put an end once for all to all the pretence about Emma's relations with Nelson having been platonic. The uncomplimentary allusions to the Prince of Wales, moreover, dished all the unhappy widow's chances of getting his royal highness to take up her claims.

Released a second time from the King's Bench with fifty pounds in her pocket, she resolved in June, 1814, to put the seas between herself and her insatiable creditors. As her place of refuge she chose Calais, then almost as popular with British insolvents as Boulogne was afterwards to become. She and Horatia had still about two hundred a year on which at first they contrived to live in some comfort. “Near me,” writes Emma, “is an English lady, who has resided here for twenty-five years, who has a day school. At eight in the morning I take Horatia, fetch her at one ; at three we dine ; she goes out till five, and then in the evening we walk. She learns everything—piano, harp, languages gramatically. She knows French and Italian well, but will still improve. Not any girls, but those of the best families go there. Last evening we walked two miles to a *fête-champêtre pour les bourgeois*. Everybody is pleased with Horatia. The General and his

good old wife are very good to us ; but our little world of happiness is ourselves. If, my dear Sir, Lord Sidmouth, would do something for dear Horatia, so that I can be enabled to give her an education, and also for her dress, it would ease me and make me very happy. Surely he owes this to Nelson."

But Nelson was dead and Trafalgar could not be undone. And, said my lords of the Treasury with a wink, what's dead can't come to life again, we think. The petition was like preceding petitions, refused. The broken woman and the little girl moved out to a farm at St. Pierre. They were happy there, but in the autumn they had to move back into lodgings in Calais, in the Rue Française. The new year, 1815, found Emma with only ten pounds in her pocket and nothing to look forward to till Horatia's annuity next quarter-day. The fourteen-year-old girl had already borrowed twenty pounds from a friend in England. And then, in that cold cheerless town, Emma fell seriously ill of some dropsical complaint. One hopes that she and the girl whom she at least regarded as a daughter—who quite possibly was her daughter—learned to love one another in adversity. Horatia was with her when she died on January 15th, in the fifty-first year of her age. A priest administered the last sacraments ; for she who had never troubled at all about religion in earlier days, had been at some time or other received into the Roman Catholic Church. To have publicly announced this would have killed the feeble spark of sympathy still felt for her at home.

Young Horatia and " Old Dame Francis," the housekeeper she had imported from England, saw to her funeral, which, one is glad to hear, was attended in memory of Nelson by several naval officers then at Calais. The cemetery was afterwards converted into a timber yard, and the site of her

grave cannot be traced. Horatia was fetched away by Matcham, the husband of Nelson's favourite sister. With his daughters she was brought up. She married a parson named Ward in 1822, and lived to be eighty. Through her many children, one likes to believe, the blood of Nelson and perhaps Emma Hamilton is still perpetuated amongst us.

Emma has kept a warmer place in the hearts of her countrymen—or perhaps I should say, of her countrywomen—than she did in the hearts of her children. During the last half century there has been a distinct tendency to make a national heroine of her. One biographer, I seem to remember, compares her with Joan of Arc! This is to take her at Nelson's valuation. One likes and honours him for wishing to wrap the woman he loved in his own glory and for pointing to her as his helper and inspirer; but, of course, it wasn't so. She had no more part in his victories than the brother whom the daft government chose to honour. When she says that "the last and fatal time he went forth, she persuaded him to it," one doesn't know whether to be amused or angry. Unhappily, her direct influence can be traced only in the least glorious, if not positively inglorious, chapter of his active career. Discerning historians are doubtful about the value of his services to Britain when he was so busy chastising the rebellious subjects of His Sicilian Majesty. He never guessed it, but at that time Emma got very near to making him forget his duty to his own country altogether. It is not to be supposed that she saw that, either. She had no principles or ideals, and never pretended to be religious, as so many did in that age. And intellect in the larger sense she had not, though none would deny her considerable cleverness and adaptability.

If Romney had not painted her and Nelson had not loved

her, only the toiler in the bypaths of history would have heard of Lady Hamilton. By him she would have been remembered, as she is actually remembered by Italian historians, as the minion of a bad queen and the devoted adherent of tyranny. Even so, zeal never moved her to go out, as Théroigne went out, to fight for her cause with sword and pistol.

There was nothing heroic in her ; nothing even very fine. In her youth she was praised by Greville as absolutely disinterested—in her love for him, he might have added. Rapacious and greedy, she was not—yet she made havoc with her lovers' purses. Undoubtedly, she was good-natured and liberal. The most has been made of her generosity to her relatives and friends, but she did not allow fondness for her child or children to compromise her reputation. A good daughter, she was a careless mother, and by her wanton prodigality ill discharged her obligations to Horatia. To her credit, be it said—and this is much—she was kind to animals. It is on record that she was revolted by the disgusting battues in which the odious King of Naples, like other kings before and since, delighted. Nelson, in a letter to her, dated October 21st, 1801, says : “ I expect that all animals will increase where you are, for I never expect that you will suffer any to be killed.” But, alas ! she was not greatly troubled by the killing of Neapolitan rebels.

It is, in fact, in the capacity for which her panegyrists feel most called upon to apologise that she is most admirable. The loving, loyal, submissive mistress of Greville is much to be preferred to the court favourite. She made her husband happy, too. Some inherent, indestructible charm she possessed, some charm which not even Romney has been able to transmit ; for that charm was not wholly of the body, and

was most potent, as we have seen, when she had waxed clumsy and middle-aged. It lay not in her mind which was common, nor in her manners, for refinement she never acquired. Emma was a great courtesan—rather, though the word is seldom applied to women, a great lover. Those who had lain in her arms never ceased to like her ; to them she always remained “the dear Emma,” and to the greatest of England’s sea kings, the most precious thing on earth.

“ THE SPANISH DANCER.”

(LOLA MONTEZ).

I

LOLA MONTEZ was more the adventuress than it might seem any adventuress could be. Such fidelity to type in most professions always makes one suspicious of pose, as one is suspicious of the painter with a velvet jacket and no morals. But Lola, far from posing, probably never troubled to classify herself at all, and most assuredly would never have described herself as an adventuress. Indeed, she would have been less surprised to hear herself called by less flattering and more Biblical-sounding names. She did not consciously live up to a convention ; unwittingly, she established one. Her contemporaries were hugely excited and diverted by her—this I infer, not from the space devoted to her in newspapers of the time, which is meagre, but to the fact that even the dignified *Times* thought fit to chronicle her exploits, here, there, and everywhere, an honour which the great journal would certainly not confer at the present day on a woman of similar character and career. All memories of Becky Sharp were obscured by her. She became the model for all subsequent adventuresses—on the stage, at least. Beautiful—not too young—of doubtful nationality, with, as she assured everybody, a dash of the Spanish—an Anglo-Indian past—husbands, one, two, three, in the background—nominally, a dancer—one who positively smoked—who

horsewhipped bold men—above all, who had bewitched, and as it was rumoured, bankrupted a king—Lola Montez has been studied but never been surpassed by the most fervid of melodramatists.

Actually, she played bigger parts than those assigned to the professional sirens of transpontine and Drury Lane drama. She intrudes like a clash of cymbals on the notice of the historian ; she had her part in great affairs, was whirled about in a political revolution. Her biography is starred with the names of great men, and transports us to the four quarters of the globe. Within her span of forty-two years, she rode on the Viceroy's elephant, sang for her supper in the streets, ruled a kingdom, was charged at a police court ; she was at home in the courts of Old Europe, in the mining camps of young Australia, in the literary circles of Paris, in the backwoods of California. Regarded by pious Germans as the veritable Scarlet Woman, she finished in the odour of sanctity—a Protestant Pelagian.

Wherever she went, things began to happen. She had the knack of adventure. Also, it must be said, of making enemies. To this generation, which prides itself on its audacity, it may seem astonishing that such a woman should have flourished in mid-Victorian times ; I, on the other hand, question whether she would have been possible to-day.

She was no Spaniard, let it be said at once, and so far as I have been able to discover, never set foot in Spain. The daughter of an Englishman, Gilbert, and an Irishwoman, she was born at Limerick in the year 1818. She was baptized, she tells us, Maria Dolores Eliza Rosanna—an unusual combination, certainly, for her country and period. I doubt the first two names. She does not appear to have been called

by any but the third or fourth¹ till she blossomed out as Lola Montez—"Lola" being, of course, the lightsome diminutive of the mournful-sounding "Dolores." But in such picturesque inexactitudes the account of herself communicated by our adventuress to an American named Chauncey Burr, is exceedingly rich. Through her mother, born Miss Oliver, of Castle Oliver, Cloghnafoy, Co. Limerick, she claimed her Andalusian descent, "her ancestors having been Moorish grandees who settled in Spain in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella"—assuredly a most unpropitious moment! But it is known that the Oliver family was founded by Captain Robert Oliver, who came into Ireland with Captain St. Leger's regiment about the year 1645, and was granted lands in various parts of County Limerick. The family pedigree reveals no trace of Spanish or Moorish blood.² Nor was her father, Edward Gilbert, the "scion of a knightly house," as Lola asserted. He was an ensign in the 25th Regiment of the line (now the King's Own Scottish Borderers), and could boast the more honourable distinction, rare enough in those days, of having risen from the ranks, thanks to his valour and good conduct during the long Napoleonic wars.

Of his family we hear nothing more. It was probably want of money which caused him, when his daughter was four years old, to exchange into the 44th Regiment, then under orders for India. Lola's first recollections must have been of the East. Before she was seven, her father died, and her mother, whose beauty she seems to have inherited, married a comrade of his, Major Craigie,³ afterwards Deputy-Adjutant-

¹ It is "Rosanna" in the divorce case; "Betty" immediately after; and "Eliza," only, on her tombstone.

² These particulars of the Oliver family were communicated by a private correspondent.

³ Of the family into which the novelist, "John Oliver Hobbes," married,

General. Of her stepfather Lola always spoke affectionately. When the time came for her, as a European child, to be sent home, she was entrusted to the care of his relatives at Montrose, on the west coast of Scotland. A bleak change it must have been from the warmly coloured Indian scene ; but these years of her girlhood were happy ones, and it was then she made at least one acquaintance which was precious to her in after life. It was, indeed, she informs us, because the Craigies—dour Calvinists—were spoiling her that she was transferred to the custody of her stepfather's friend, Sir Jasper Nichols, and sent by him to be educated with his own girls, first to Paris, then to Bath.

It was there that her mother, after fifteen years' absence from England, came to have a look at her. Mrs. Craigie was delighted to find that report had nowise exaggerated her daughter's beauty. Already she had promised her hand to Sir Abraham Lumley, Judge of the Supreme Court in India, "a rich and gouty old rascal of sixty years." Lola was first informed of the match projected for her by Mr. Thomas James, a lieutenant in the 21st Bengal Native Infantry, a poor subaltern home on sick leave, whom Mrs. Craigie had nursed back to health on the voyage, and in whom she was disposed to place confidence as he was understood to be engaged to be married. Whether he was or not, he fell at the first fire from Miss Gilbert's eyes. Having terrified her by picturing the fate awaiting her in India, he persuaded the nineteen-year-old girl to elope with him. Away they went, in the first month of Victoria's reign, to Dublin, where James placed her with his family. Mrs. Craigie was furious, but realizing, perhaps, that her daughter was now hopelessly compromised, consented to their marriage. So they were made man and wife somewhere in County Meath on July 23rd, 1837.

The bride's own reflections on this event are worth quoting : " So, in flying from that marriage with ghastly and gouty old age, the child lost her mother, and gained what proved to be only the outside shell of a husband, who had neither a brain which she could respect, nor a heart which it was possible for her to love. Runaway matches, like runaway horses, are almost sure to end in a smash-up. My advice to all young girls who contemplate such a step is that they had better hang or drown themselves just one hour before they start."

To which such young girls might retort that deliberately planned, worldly-wise matches often turn out no better. Disillusionment did not, in fact, overtake young Mrs. James for some time. This we shall presently be told, though there may be some truth in the story that driving one day in Dublin, she had a row with her husband, opened the carriage door, and jumped out into the street.¹ For the entertainment of a Parisian public, she afterwards described her life in the country parts of Ireland as insufferably dull : " The day was passed in hunting and eating, these exercises succeeding each other with the utmost regularity. Meanwhile, the system was sustained by innumerable cups of tea, taken at stated intervals and with much deliberateness." But she admits to receptions at Dublin Castle, and repeats rather vapid compliments addressed to her by the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Normanby.

However, it appears, she rejoiced when the time came for her to return to India with her husband. To Miss Eden, sister of the Viceroy, Lord Auckland, we are indebted for a

¹ Letter of a correspondent to the *Daily Express*, July 21st, 1909, who incorrectly adds that she was not heard of again until her appearance at Munich.

picture of the future adventuress, at the age of twenty-one, much more sympathetic and probably truer than any she drew herself in embittered middle age.¹ Writing on September 8th, 1839, the diarist says that "Simla is much moved just now by the arrival of a Mrs. James, who has been talked of as a great beauty of the year, and drives every other woman with pretensions in that line quite distracted." Mrs. Craigie, who is still very handsome herself, has not so far forgiven her daughter for her runaway marriage, "but as it now cannot be helped, we have all been trying for the last year to make it up, as she frets dreadfully about her only child. She has withstood it till now, but at last consented to ask them for a month, and they arrived three days ago. The rush on the road was remarkable, and one or two of the ladies were looking absolutely nervous. But nothing could be more unsatisfactory than the result, for Mrs. James looked lovely, and Mrs. Craigie had set up for her a very grand jonpaun [kind of sedan chair], with bearers in fine orange and brown liveries, and the same for herself; and James is a sort of smart-looking man with bright waistcoats and bright teeth, with a showy horse, and he rode along in an attitude of respectful attention to *ma belle mere*. Altogether it was an imposing sight, and I cannot see any way out of it but magnanimous admiration."

"Tuesday, September 10th.—We had a dinner yesterday. Mrs. James is undoubtedly very pretty, and such a merry, unaffected girl. She is only seventeen [twenty-one, in fact] and does not look so old, and when one thinks she is married to a junior lieutenant in the Indian army fifteen years older than herself, and that they have a hundred and sixty rupees a month, and are to pass their whole lives in India, I do not

¹ Oddly enough, these entries have escaped the notice of all the other biographers of Lola Montez.

wonder at Mrs. Craigie's resentment at her having run away from school."

The viceregal party not only reconciled Mrs. James to her mother, but exerted themselves to give her a good time. Later on in the same year (1839), they noticed her at her husband's cantonment at Karnal, where she "looked like a star among the others." "I don't wonder," adds Miss Eden, "if a tolerable-looking girl comes up the country that she is persecuted with proposals." Under date November 17th, we read: "We left Karnal yesterday morning. Little Mrs. James was so unhappy at our going that we asked her to come and pass the day here, and brought her with us. She went from tent to tent, and chattered all day, and visited her friend, Mrs. —, who is with the camp. I gave her a pink silk gown, and it was altogether a very happy day for her evidently. It ended on her going back to Karnal on my elephant, Mr. James sitting behind, and she had never been on an elephant before, and thought it delightful. She is very pretty, and a good little thing, apparently, but they are very poor, and she is very young and lively, and if she falls into bad hands she would soon laugh herself into foolish scrapes. At present the husband and wife are very fond of each other, but a girl who marries at fifteen hardly knows what she likes."

The Hon. Emily Eden must be ranked among the minor prophets. Perhaps, in contrast with the glitter of a court, the young wife realized more keenly her poverty and cheerless prospects; perhaps the husband and wife were not as fond of each other as they seemed; at all events, upon the break-up of the cantonment at Karnal, in the year 1841, the girl left her husband and joined her mother at Calcutta, where, she admits, she received but a cool welcome. In her

"autobiography" she names a Mrs. Lomer as the cause of the trouble. Her stepfather decided to send her back to his folks in Scotland, and took an affectionate farewell of her. James, too, came down to see her off. They never met again.

Upon her arrival in England, Lola was met by Mr. David Craigie, and flatly refused to accompany him to Perth. She speaks of an American lady, Mrs. Stevens, a very gay woman whom she had met on board, as having influenced her to this decision. But there was a Mr. Lennox, another fellow passenger, elsewhere described as A.D.C. to some governor, who certainly had more to do with it. Events must have proceeded very rapidly, when we consider the time it took for news to travel in those days, for not later than the autumn of 1842, Lieutenant James had instituted proceedings for divorce in the Consistory Court of London, to which at that time jurisdiction in all matrimonial cases belonged. The case was heard before Dr. Lushington on December 15th, 1842. Mrs. Rosanna James was found guilty of adultery with Mr. Lennox aboard the ship *Larkins*, and of having cohabited with him at the Imperial Hotel, Covent Garden, and in lodgings at St. James's. There was no defence. The court being satisfied with the proofs pronounced a divorce *a mensâ et toro*.

This amounted to nothing more than a judicial separation. In those days, prior to the passing of the Act of 1857, to obtain a complete release, the aggrieved husband would have been required, next, to bring an action for criminal conversation against his wife's paramour in the civil court, and if successful, he could then have applied to the House of Lords for a private bill of divorcement. These proceedings would have cost about a thousand pounds, and would, no

doubt, have been as far beyond the means of an Indian subaltern as beyond those of the poor countryman to whom Mr. Justice Maule addressed his scathing criticism of this procedure somewhere about that time.

If it be asked why, then, was it worth James's while to go so far, the reply might be that the decree of the ecclesiastical court at least released him from all further responsibility for his wife's maintenance. From which one would infer that his love for the girl he had carried off from her school was as dead as a stone. They never crossed each other's path again. He retired with the rank of captain from the army in 1856, and died in 1871. I wonder what he thought of his wife's subsequent career. He might have been able to tell us whether there was anything in her nature which made it inevitable. It is certainly difficult to recognize the bold adventuress in "the good little thing" of Simla. Her physical courage, her impetuosity, and her undoubtedly violent temper, notwithstanding, no one seems to have seen in her anything but the normal young lady. Nor in later life does she appear as a woman of insatiable appetites, prepared to risk everything to gratify her passion. Her meeting with Lennox was possibly the turning-point in her life. She never once mentions his name. Still, her love for him must have been strong for her to court the utter disgrace which in those days attended the divorced woman. "All for love and the world well lost"—so she had thought when she eloped with Thomas James. But Lennox, more than he, one suspects was responsible for her final disillusionment. We hear no more of him—the lover, like the husband, passes from the scene. It looks as though he forsook her; certainly he made no permanent provision for the woman who had lost everything for him. But judgment cannot be given against him.

He could not make her his wife. She may have tired of him as she tired of her husband ; her temper might have driven him away ; she may have left him, as she is said to have left James in the streets of Dublin.

Mrs. Craigie put on mourning for her daughter and "sent out the customary notifications." The passage relating to the woman taken in adultery had, I suppose, been expunged from the Bible of those days.

II

"To a woman in Lola's situation, London in the early 'forties offered every inducement to go to the devil. Between a roaring maelstrom of the coarsest libertinism, on the one hand, and an impregnable barrier of heartless Puritanism on the other, her destruction was wellnigh inevitable. The hotchpotch of unorganized humanity that we call Society seldom presented an uglier appearance than it did in the first decade of Victoria's reign. Sir Mulberry Hawk and Pecksniff are types of the two contending forces. Blackguardism was matched against snivelling cant. Those were the days of Crockford's, of Vauxhall, of the sponging-house, of public executions turned into popular festivals ; when gentlemen of fashion painted policemen pea-green and beat them till they were senseless ; when peers got drunk and the people starved. Opposed to this debauchery was a religion of convention and propriety, narrow, stupid, and un-Christlike—the cult of the correct and the respectable, the fetishes to which Lady Flora Hastings and many another woman were coldly sacrificed."¹

¹ *Lola Montez, an Adventuress of the Forties.* By the present writer. [1909.]

This was the world upon which the discarded wife of Lieutenant James looked forth from her lodgings in Grafton Street. She was not without money at this time. Her step-father, she says, had given her a thousand pounds when she left Calcutta. We may believe that, or suppose that Lennox made her a parting gift. Hopelessly *déclassée*, the divorced woman was regarded as fair game by all the rakes about town. Whether she rebuffed them from the outset or whether she disappointed and tricked them, it is certain that she made powerful enemies among the fast set, notably Lord Ranelagh, who was then swaggering about in the cloak he had worn in the Carlist wars. Instead of accepting a new "protector," she resolved to earn her living on the stage, and received some coaching from an eminently respectable actress, Miss Fanny Kelly. But it was not as an actress that she made her debut on the boards. It was announced that on June 3rd, 1843, between the acts of the opera, "The Barber of Seville," at Her Majesty's Theatre, Donna Lola Montez, of the Teatro Real, Seville, would make her first appearance in this country in an original Spanish dance.

It is curious, one reflects, that in this manner, on a playbill, the first appearance of an historical character should have been announced. It may have been Lord Ranelagh himself who put the idea of Spain and a Spanish character into Mrs. James's head. In Scotland, in Ireland, and in India, she would have heard little about Spain. To her happy choice of a name, she owes, I fancy, a great deal of her notoriety. "Lola Montez" can be pronounced with ease by any person of any nationality. How much there is in a name! The fame of the Thoroughgoods and Wrigglesworths could not possibly extend beyond the limits of Anglo-Saxondom; the Loeuillots, the d'Aureignois, the

Szczepanskis, are doomed to anonymity among a people by whom their names are as unpronounceable as an algebraical formula.

Attracted by the announcement, a critic, who afterwards wrote under the pseudonym of "Q," obtained an introduction to the new star. In her he was delighted to recognize a lady whom he had often seen going in and out of a house in Grafton Street, opposite his own, and whose blue eyes had bored a deep hole through his heart. He dwells on her extreme vivacity and lively conversation, but suspects that her foreign accent is assumed. "Her figure was even more attractive than her face, lovely as the latter was. Lithe and graceful as a young fawn, every movement that she made seemed instinct with melody as she prepared to dance. Her blue eyes were blazing and flashing with excitement. Her foot and ankle were faultless. As she swept round the stage her slender waist swayed to the music, and her graceful head and neck bent with it, like a flower that bends with the impulse given to its stem by the changing and fitful temper of the wind." The audience looked on, charmed by the dancer's loveliness, if not satisfied of her talent. Those nearest the footlights must have caught the exclamation, "Why, it's Betty James!" Lord Ranelagh, in his omnibus box, had penetrated that disguise of mantilla and flaunting petticoats. Above the applause from stalls and gallery was heard, on the stage at least, a prolonged, venomous hiss. Ten minutes more and the curtain rang down upon the Andalusian danseuse. The papers next morning praised her in extravagant terms, but the management dared not quarrel with the men about town who were the theatre's most influential patrons. In vain Lola Montez wrote to the *Era*, protesting against cruel calumnies which represented her as a disreputable

character long known in the town. She vowed she was a true Spaniard, and had never before set foot in London. Her lawyers had been instructed to prosecute her detractors. But for this letter and for "Q's" communications, we might have concluded that want of ability had been the cause of the fiasco. For, endowed with beauty and grace, Lola Montez never became a first-class dancer.¹

Her threat was an empty one. Realizing the strength of the forces she had antagonized, she abruptly left London. Indeed "Q," calling at her lodgings, the day after the catastrophe, found her already gone. Her movements during the next nine or ten months (June, 1843, to March, 1844) are not easy to trace in their proper sequence. But this period was crowded with incident. From London it seems she went first to Brussels. All her money being spent, she was reduced to singing in the streets. She was befriended by a man whom she believed to be a German, who took her with him to Warsaw and got her an engagement at the Opera. Her arrival in the Polish capital was followed by the inevitable row. Of this we have only the account which the Yankee clergyman took down from her own lips. Prince Paskievich, the formidable Russian viceroy, turns a lustful eye upon the dancer, and makes dishonouring proposals which she scornfully and emphatically disdains. His Excellency retaliates by having her hissed two or three nights in succession. (It looks as though Lola had deliberately transferred the London episode, about which she is discreetly silent, to the stage of Warsaw.) The heroine advances to the footlights and denounces the wicked prince. "Then came a tremendous shower of applause from the audience ; and the old Princess

¹ In the illuminating language of one of my American reviewers, she was "a flop."

Paskievich, who was present, both nodded her head and clapped her hands to the enraged and fiery Lola. An immense crowd of Poles, who hated the prince, escorted her to her lodgings. She found herself a heroine, without expecting it or, indeed, without intending it. In a moment of rage she had told the whole truth, without stopping to count the cost, and she had unintentionally set the whole of Warsaw by the ears.

"The hatred which the Poles intensely felt towards the government and its agents found a convenient opportunity of demonstrating itself, and within twenty-four hours Warsaw was bubbling and raging with the signs of an incipient revolution. When Lola Montez was apprised that her arrest was ordered, she barricaded her door ; and when the police arrived, she sat behind it with a pistol in her hand, declaring she would certainly shoot the first man dead who should break in. The police were frightened, and they went off to inform their masters what a tigress they had to confront, and to consult as to what should be done. In the meantime, the French consul gallantly came forward and claimed Lola Montez as a French subject, which saved her from immediate arrest ; but the order was peremptory that she must quit Warsaw."

The terms (not quoted here) in which the adventuress speaks of Prince Paskievich satisfy us that she owed him some personal grudge ; nor does the story sound at all improbable in any part. Lola, it has been said, is more likely to have cheated the prince than to have disdained him ; the distinction to a proud and angry suitor might not have been apparent. Only two years had elapsed since the young English army lady had left India. During that time she had become fully conscious of her power over men, if indeed she

had not been aware of it in all her girlhood and chafed beneath the mantle of respectability. She had also discovered her ability to take care of herself, and a manlike courage which must have surprised her. The incident marks the final transformation of the British officer's wife into the international adventuress.

It was a Polish critic, we learn, who perpetrated the following elaborate panegyric. "Lola possesses twenty-six of the twenty-seven points on which a Spanish writer insists as essential to feminine beauty—and real connoisseurs will agree that blue eyes and black hair appear more ravishing than black eyes and black hair. The points enumerated are : three black—the eyes, eyelashes, and eyebrows ; three white—the skin, the teeth, the hands ; three red—the lips, the cheeks, the nails ; three long—the body, the hair, the hands ; three short—the ears, the teeth, the legs (!) ; three broad—the bosom, the forehead, the space between the eyebrows ; three full—the lips, the arms, the calves ; three small—the waist, the hands, the feet ; three thin—the fingers, the hair, the lips. All these perfections are Lola's, except as regards the colour of her eyes, which I, for one, would not wish to change. Silky hair, rivalling the gloss of the raven's wing, falls in luxuriant folds down her back ; on the slender, delicate neck, whose whiteness shames the swan's down, rests the beautiful head. How, too, shall I describe Lola's bosom, if words fail me to describe the dazzling whiteness of her teeth ? "

That was how Lola looked in her twenty-sixth year.

As an amusing yarn may be dismissed her account of her call upon the Tsar Nicholas at St. Petersburg, when the affairs of the Caucasus were gravely discussed, and when, upon the intrusion of a delegation, she was shut in a cupboard and

temporarily forgotten by his Imperial Majesty. The only time Lola saw the Tsar was on the occasion of his visit to Berlin, in this same year (1843). Mounted on a fiery Cordovan barb, she was present at a review given by King Frederick William in honour of his guest. In order to force herself upon the attention of the monarchs, as one can hardly doubt, she made her horse bolt, taking care that it carried her towards the royal group. A gendarme struck the horse and tried to drive it away. Lola instantly lashed him across the face with her whip. The man retaliated ; but out of respect for their majesties, the incident was allowed, for the moment, to end there. Next day the dancer was served with a summons to quit Berlin. She tore the document to pieces and threw them in the face of the official. Friends at court interceded for her, but it is hard to believe that the policeman was sent to ask her pardon. If her object was to win the favour of king or emperor, she undoubtedly failed, but the story of her duel with the Prussian gendarme made her notorious all over Europe.

About this time, if she is to be believed, she was more or less "engaged" to a Prince Schulkoski. Someone, obviously, must have been paying for her Cordovan barbs, for her earnings as a dancer till she achieved notoriety must have been slight. This prince she may have jilted for a much more interesting lover. At Dresden, Wagner was invited to visit Liszt in his box at the Opera ; but the composer withdrew almost at once, for in the box was a woman almost too beautiful and too elegantly dressed, who looked at him with insolent eyes. "It was the dancer, Lola Montez, who was the pianist's latest adorer."

"She had been his companion for several weeks. Liszt allowed her to make love to him, and amused himself with

this dangerous sweetheart. But without any conviction, without any real curiosity. She annoyed, she irritated him during his hours of work. Before long he planned to escape, and having arranged everything with the hotel porter, he departed without leaving any address, but not without having first locked this most wearisome of inamoratas in her room. For twelve hours Lola Montez made a fearful uproar, breaking whatever she could lay her hands upon. But all had been paid for in advance."

This story by a recent biographer of Franz Liszt¹ is quite in Lola's own style. It does not impress one as an exhaustive account of her relations with the great musician. The association was taken seriously enough by Mme. d'Agoult, who had long been Liszt's unwedded wife and had borne him children. It was because of Lola that she broke with him. In the recollections which the reformed adventuress published for the delectation of the American public, she pictures a situation not dissimilar from that described—Mme. d'Agoult and George Sand fighting over Liszt and throwing things about, while he, poor man, creeps under the table for safety.

On March 30th, 1844—almost exactly ten months after her first appearance at Her Majesty's—Lola Montez made her bow to the Parisian public at the Opera, in *Il Lazzarone*, by Halévy. Her beauty and the reports which had preceded her impressed the audience, but they perceived at once she was no dancer. To create a sensation at any cost, she took off her satin shoe, or as some say, her garter, and flung it into one of the boxes, where it was pounced upon and held aloft in triumph by a man of fashion. A round of applause followed. The critics liked her, but shook their heads. "We suspect," wrote Théophile Gautier, "after the recital of her

¹ Guy de Pourtalès.

equestrian exploits, that Mlle. Lola is more at home in the saddle than on the boards. She has a little foot and pretty legs. Her use of these is another matter."

Claudin says : " Lola Montez was an enchantress. There was something about her provoking and voluptuous which drew you. Her skin was white, her wavy hair like the tendrils of the woodbine, her eyes tameless and wild, her mouth like a budding pomegranate. Add to that, a dashing figure, charming feet, and perfect grace. Unfortunately, as a dancer, she was destitute of talent."

Lola, whose first appearance at the Paris Opera was (as at Her Majesty's) the last, found herself with no other capital than her beauty. She had brought it to a good market in the Paris of Louis Philippe's day. Had she been as venal as she is often represented, it is hard to believe that she could not have found a wealthy and aristocratic protector. The *lion* (the man about town of those days) knew how to manage women, and the splendid creature's infernal temper would not have frightened him. It must, therefore, have been something very much like love which decided her to become the mistress of a *mère* journalist, Dujarier, of the *Presse*. She met him, she tells us, in the autumn of '44, and " the following spring the marriage was to take place." The word " marriage " is, of course, introduced here out of regard for the susceptibilities of the American public. I do not think that such a permanent arrangement was contemplated by her lover. " It was arranged that Alexandre Dumas and the celebrated poet, Méry, should accompany them on their marriage tour through Spain." Dujarier certainly was a friend of the great Alexandre, and introduced his mistress to the most brilliant literary circles of Paris. Meanwhile, he devoted every hour he could spare from his duties to her,

and from him she got to know a great deal about European politics, knowledge which was soon to become very useful to her.

Dumas, it is alleged,¹ though smitten with her charms, said she had the evil eye, and would bring misfortune on those who linked their fate with hers. The novelist so saying was merely wise after the event.

The fiercest rivalry existed between the *Presse*, edited by the famous Girardin, and the *Globe*, edited by Granier de Cassagnac. The feud was naturally pursued with zest by the respective staffs. Dujarier bought up some notes of hand, signed by de Cassagnac, and sued him in the courts; which seems a mean thing to do. Beauvallon, the *Globe's* dramatic critic, responded by making Lola's acquaintance, which Dujarier, of course, would not stand for. Beauvallon then got hold of a woman whom Lola had superseded, and she, we may be sure, fanned the enmity for all it was worth. One evening in March, 1845, while Lola was rehearsing for a musical comedy at the Porte St. Martin Theatre, her lover joined a dinner party at the celebrated Frères Provençaux restaurant. He found himself in the jolliest company, presided over by Roger de Beauvoir, whose curly black hair, wonderful waistcoats, and pearl-grey pantaloons made him the delight of the fair sex and the envied of his fellow-boulevardiers. But Beauvallon was also there. The two journalists made a dispute over cards the pretext for a quarrel. Next morning, Dujarier was waited on at his *appartement* in the Rue Laffitte by two men, Ecquevillez and de Flers, with a demand for an apology. This was refused and an encounter with Beauvallon was fixed for March 11th.

¹ *An Englishman in Paris* (Albert Vandam)—not a reliable authority.

Perceiving her lover's preoccupation, Lola scented that something was amiss, and at last wrung from him the admission that he was about to engage in a duel. He gave her to understand, however, that his opponent would be Roger de Beauvoir. Her alarm subsided, for she believed Roger to be too good-natured to fire to kill. Dumas, consulted by Dujarier, had grave misgivings. He knew the journalist couldn't hit a haystack at twenty yards. He advised him to choose swords instead of pistols, but Dujarier preferred to trust to the chances of the bullet than to the forbearance of a known swordsman. The duel took place on a snowy morning, in the Bois de Boulogne, near the Madrid restaurant. The usual efforts by the seconds to bring about a reconciliation having failed, the principals were placed and the signal given to fire. Dujarier's ball flew wide of the mark. He dropped his pistol and faced his adversary. Beauvallon took deliberate aim and pulled the trigger. His bullet went through the bridge of his enemy's nose, and broke the occipital bone. Dujarier died within a few minutes. Lola, who had gone to her lover's apartments in search of him, hurried down on hearing the sound of wheels. She pulled open the door of the carriage, and her lover's body lurched heavily against her.

The duel was the occasion of two celebrated trials. The case turned on the article in the code of honour which forbids a duellist to make use of weapons which he has already tried and with which he is proficient. Dujarier, it was contended, had not fallen in fair fight. Beauvallon was put on his trial at Rouen (because, I suppose, an impartial jury could not be found in Paris). Dumas gave evidence ; so did Lola, dressed in a close-fitting black satin costume and a flowing shawl. The accused was acquitted of the charge of murder ; but

eighteen months later was convicted of perjury at the first trial and sentenced to eight years' imprisonment.

Lola by that time (October 9th, 1847) had left France. Within three weeks of the fatal duel, she had again been hissed off the stage at the Porte St. Martin. Even when pelted with her garters, the Parisians would not tolerate so incompetent a performer. Dujarier had bequeathed her eighteen shares in the Palais Royal Theatre, worth about twenty thousand francs (£800), so she was enabled to stay on till the first trial in the spring of '46. She mourned her lover sincerely, we need not doubt, but less even than Lennox or Liszt, is the Parisian journalist to be conceived filling her life or holding her for long. A French pressman, born and bred, one might say, on the boulevards, and an Irish woman, reared in Anglo-Indian army society, could have had few interests in common. Lola, on her coming to Paris, Gautier tells us, spoke French hardly at all. Dujarier loved her for her body ; in the long run he would have found her altogether too virile a mistress. And she would certainly have hankered after bigger game.

III

“ The moment I get a nice, round, lump sum of money, I am going to try to hook a prince.” If Lola did not actually use these words, ascribed to her by Vandam, they express her ambition precisely enough. The part of a Pompadour or Castlemaine, she must have thought would fit her extremely well. Of courts, if only viceregal ones, she had seen something. Kings, she knew, did not demand of their favourites the wit or the intellectual brilliancy without which one could not get very far in upper bohemia. But which king ? Louis

Philippe was obviously no subject for her wiles ; nor the prim Leopold of Belgium ; nor Charles Albert of Sardinia, too deep, then, in politics. Women were seated on the thrones of England, Spain, and Portugal. Prussia was barred to her ; Russia and Austria too far off. At one time she is said to have planned an assault upon His Majesty William II of the Netherlands, who was known to be on bad terms with his Russian queen. Eventually, she elected to return to Germany, where princes most abounded.

In those days the German spas were the chief, in fact the only pleasure resorts of the fashionable world. The Riviera had not yet then been invented, nor the gory delights of the Scottish wildernesses discovered. Lola, assuming a more discreet manner, wandered from Homburg to Wiesbaden, from Ems to Baden-Baden, "punting in a small way, not settling down anywhere, and almost deliberately avoiding both Frenchmen and Englishmen." She must have picked up a fair knowledge of German by this time. At Baden she met the Prince of Orange, whom she may have met at Simla. And there, casting her line for a carp, she hooked a gudgeon in the person of His Highness Prince Henry LXXII of Reuss, who invited her to visit him at his own court. Here she presently went through agonies of boredom. "The etiquette was as strict as in the palace of the Most Catholic King, and the deference exacted by Henry LXXII as profound as though he had been Tsar of All the Russias. True, in his territory, only half as large again as the county of Middlesex, he wielded a power as absolute as that autocrat. Of this pettiness, the beautiful stranger soon showed her impatience. Her infirmity of temper betrayed itself. She infringed His Highness's prerogative by chastising his subjects—still, this could be overlooked by an indulgent prince.

Bur when Henry one morning beheld Lola walking across his flower-beds, he felt that it was time to vindicate the outraged majesty of the throne. With his own august hands he wrote and signed an order expelling Mme. Montez from the principality. To this decree effect was given only when His Highness had satisfied to the last pfennig a tremendously long bill for expenses presented to him by the audacious offender."

She appears next at Munich, the stage of her triumph and her finest performance.

King Louis I of Bavaria was at that time sixty-one years old. He was in every way a remarkable man, who might have been regarded as a great ruler if he had reigned over a greater realm. Boasting that he was the most German of Germans, he imitated the Medici as a patron of arts and letters and decorated his capital with buildings which are almost duplicates of models found on the other side of the Alps. The Munich which we know is largely his creation. His artistic interests, it should be added, did not blind him to the importance of material progress. To him Germany owes her first railway, and Bavaria the canal linking the Rhine and Danube. In personal character he was romantic, and, like all the Wittelsbach family, temperamental. Though by no means a voluptuary, he was a fervent admirer of beauty and still capable of falling in love.

With Lola, of whom he had already heard, he fell in love at first sight. Having been refused an engagement by the director of the Court Theatre, because of her want of talent or her riotous reputation, she asked Count Rechberg, one of the King's equerries, to procure her an audience of His Majesty. "Am I expected to see every strolling player who comes to Munich?" said Louis peevishly. "Well, sir,"

said the equerry, "this one is really worth seeing." And then Lola, tired of waiting, walked in. The King, dazzled, at once granted her prayer—she was commanded to appear at the Court Theatre. And he was in no haste to dismiss the suppliant. Lola, says one writer, came, saw, conquered. Some one else has it that eyeing her magnificent bust, the sovereign asked in wonder whether such charms could be of nature's moulding, and that Lola, ripping up her dress, satisfied his doubts.

Not only grey-headed men, but small girls felt the power of the enchantress. Luise von Kobell relates how when a child, she met "a lady, gowned in black, with a veil thrown over her head," whose wonderful eyes fairly dazzled her. This fairy-like being, she was told, was "the Spanish dancer, Lola Montez." For the little girl, the spell remained unbroken when the next evening (October 10th, 1846) she saw her dance at the Court Theatre; "in the pit they clapped and hissed—the last, because of rumours abroad that Lola was an agent of the English Freemasons, an enemy of the Jesuits, a coquette, too, who had had amorous adventures in all parts of the world." The Bavarian lady's memory must be slightly at fault—no one suspected the adventuress of any political importance, as yet. They hissed her because she couldn't dance. She appeared only once again on the stage at Munich.

Instead, she was engaged to teach the King Spanish! As she knew not more than half-a-dozen words of that language, the appointment must have been an embarrassing one. She accepted all the same, knowing very well that her pupil under the fire of her eyes wouldn't know whether they were talking Spanish or German. "I know not how—I am bewitched," His Majesty frankly admitted to one of his counsellors. Both

man and woman afterwards denied that she ever became his mistress. No one is in a position to contradict them. Louis, it must be remembered, was a romantic, and may have preferred the *pays du tendre*. That his queen displayed no jealousy of her husband's friend proves nothing, either way, for the wives of royal personages, at least in those days, were always accommodating.

Louis presented her to his ministers as his best friend. But to the world at large it certainly appeared that Lola Montez had become the King's *maîtresse en titre*. Within a few days after her arrival, hostility showed itself between her and the ministers, lay and clerical. Lola sticks to it that she was hated because she was a champion of Protestantism and the avowed foe of the Jesuits. Yet, strangely enough, she declared herself to be the daughter of a Carlist officer! So far her career had not afforded any evidence of fervent devotion to the Protestant or any other form of belief, nor is it possible to divine on what grounds she could have been taken for an agent of the English Freemasons. The truth of it is that the Bavarian ministers dreaded a reproduction of the scandals of Versailles, which would reflect discredit on the much-criticized institution of monarchy. (Upon the restoration of the Bourbons, Louis XVIII sternly told his amorous nephew, the Duc de Berry, that the days of Louis Quinze were passed.) The clergy naturally frowned upon a strange beautiful woman, the "best friend" of their married monarch, and their disapproval Lola was just the woman to resent and to challenge. No one could credit her with an ounce of tact. The Government up to that moment had been in the hands of the clericals. Because these looked down their noses at her, the adventuress discovered that she was a Liberal and remembered that she had sat under a

Presbyterian minister at Montrose. No doubt she was disappointed, as Protestants often are, at finding Catholics can be the worst of puritans.

But soon all Germany was shocked, or, what was worse, derisive. In clerical papers and in radical papers, the elderly king and his dancer were held up to ridicule. Louis was caricatured as a crowned satyr, as a pug-dog, as an ass with a crown tied to his tail; Lola was treated with less regard for decency. The Bishop of Augsburg was understood to weep daily over the King's depravity, his lordship's sensibility being gleefully contrasted by *The Times* with the hardened indifference of the Anglican bishops to the transgressions of our Georges. The Dowager Empress of Austria, sister of Louis, offered Lola two thousand pounds to quit Bavaria. Finally, when His Majesty decreed the naturalization of his favourite, his whole cabinet resigned after a strongly worded protest.

They were replaced by a vaguely Liberal ministry, perhaps because, at the moment, there was no alternative. “I will not give up Lola, I will never give up that noble princely being,” vowed Louis. “My kingdom for Lola!” She was ennobled under the title of Countess of Landsfeld and Baroness Rosenthal, and an annuity of twenty thousand florins settled upon her. When aristocratic ladies drew their skirts away as she passed, and their husbands reminded their sovereign of the stranger's questionable antecedents, he retorted: “What woman of so-called high standing would have conducted herself better had she been thrown on the world young, beautiful, and helpless? Bah! I know them all, and I tell you I don't rate too highly the virtue of the untried and untempted.” He warned his courtiers that he would regard a slight put upon Lola as an insult to himself.

The country stood amazed at what they termed the besottedness of their ruler. Most princes still had mistresses, but they kept them round the corner, so to speak, and sternly distinguished between the technical "good woman" and the bad. One wonders whether Lola might not have held her position longer if she and the King had been more discreet. Very soon her temper manifested itself. She boxed the ears of a vet. who was attending her bull-dog. Having boxed the ears of a carter who flicked the same dog with his whip, she was driven by an angry crowd to take refuge in a neighbouring shop, from which she had to be rescued by the police. Making his way on foot to her house on March 1st, 1847, Louis found a mob of two hundred students outside her door, clamouring for her blood, while from the balcony she derisively drank their health in champagne and pelted them with chocolates. The King himself was insulted. At last the street was cleared by the gendarmerie, but rioting continued all night.

Nobody can believe in his own personal unpopularity, and Lola made up her mind that it was the Jesuits who were at the bottom of all this. She says so in a letter to *The Times*. "Everyone she does not like, her prejudice transforms into a Jesuit," observes a friendly English contributor to *Fraser's Magazine*. "Jesuits stare at her in the streets, and peep out from the corners of her rooms. All the world adverse to her are puppets moved to mock and annoy her by these dark and invisible agents." It was this obsession that drove her into active politics as the champion of Liberal government. The moderate ministry was dismissed and succeeded by men such as Berks, who were frankly devoted to her, all definitely anti-clerical. Protestants were favoured, and the bust of Luther placed in the Walhalla. When, upon the defeat of

the Catholic Sonderbund in Switzerland, the Jesuits came fleeing across the frontier, they were forbidden to remain in Bavaria more than a few days. Thus encouraged, a number of university students dared to profess their Liberalism, and formed themselves into a new corps called Allemannia. The new body was at once taken under the King's protection and constituted itself the favourite's devoted bodyguard. She graced their festivals, dressed in their own close-fitting uniform. They established their headquarters in a house backing on her own.

For a year the wife of Lieutenant James reigned as uncrowned queen of Bavaria. She displayed some talent for government. Statecraft is not one of the exact sciences—the ship of state can be navigated with less technical knowledge than any other vessel. The English correspondent already quoted, remarks on her clear ideas of foreign politics, praises her for consulting persons well versed in the internal affairs of the kingdom, and congratulates her on never using her power for corrupt purposes or the promotion of unworthy persons. “Her habits of life are simple. She eats little, and of plain food, cooked in the English fashion; drinks little, keeps good hours, rises early, and labours much. The morning before and after breakfast is devoted to semi-public business. The innumerable letters she receives and affairs she has to arrange, keep herself and her secretary constantly employed during some hours. At breakfast she holds a sort of levee of persons of all sorts—ministers *in esse* or *in posse*, professors, artists, English strangers, and foreigners from all parts of the world. As is usual with women of an active mind, she is a great talker; but although an egotist and with her full share of the vanity of her sex, she understands the art of conversation sufficiently never to be wearisome.

Indeed, although capable of violent but evanescent passions—of deep but not revengeful animosities, and occasionally of weaknesses and trivialities very often found in persons suddenly raised to great power—she can be, and almost always is, a very charming person and a delightful companion. Her manners are distinguished, she is a graceful and hospitable hostess, and she understands the art of dressing to perfection.”

She was living at this time in a small house in Barerstrasse, which had been built to her own design by her friend, the architect Metzger. Inside and out, says the English visitor, the house attested “the exquisite taste of the fair owner. Books, not of a frivolous kind, borrowed from the royal library, lie about, and help to show what are the habits of this modern Amazon. Add to these a piano and a guitar, on which she accompanies herself with considerable taste and some skill, and an embroidery frame, at which she produces works that put to shame the best of those exhibited for sale in England. At the back of the house is a large flower garden, in which, during the summer, most of the political consultations between the fair Countess and her sovereign are held.”

This latter passage is instructive as affording almost the only glimpse we are ever to have of Lola at home.

The end came in the first months of 1848. On February 7th, a pilgrimage to the grave of Görres, a former revolutionary who had turned mystic and Ultramontane in his later years, was organized by a large body of clerical students. The procession soon resolved itself into a manifestation against the King’s favourite. Lola, attended only by two or three of her escort, straightway went out to encounter the demonstrators. She was received with groans and insults. “All right,” she shouted, “I will have the university closed !”

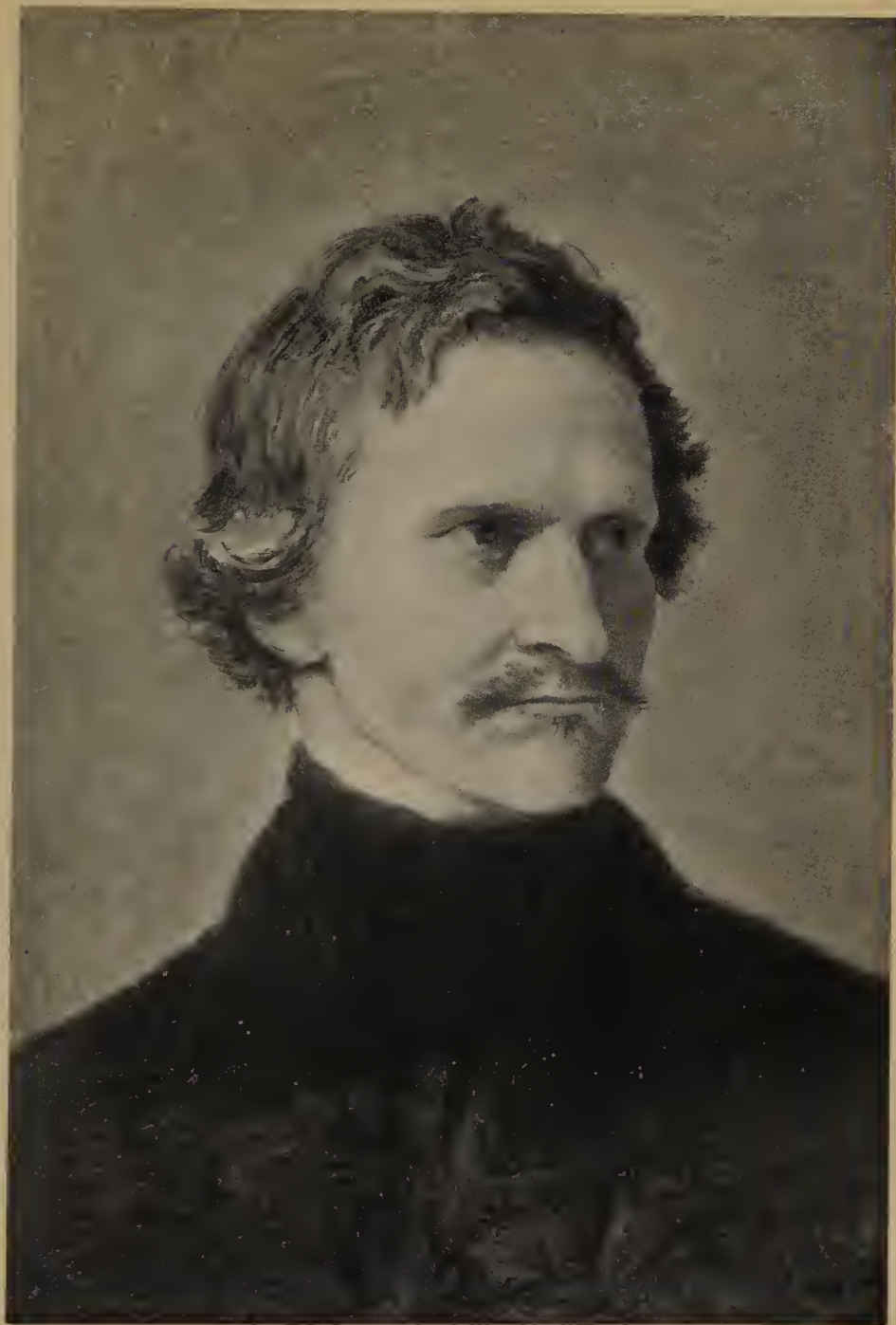
This arrogant threat exasperated the students, and they closed in upon her. Her devoted *Allemannen* were overpowered and injured, and Lola forced to retreat into the Theatine church. The Catholic rowdies not daring to violate the sanctuary, laid siege to it and were dispersed with difficulty by the military.

An angry man was King Louis when he heard of this. At once he put his beloved's threat into execution. He signed a decree closing the university and commanding all students, not natives of the city, to depart from it within twenty-four hours. The edict threw all Munich into consternation. The banishment of perhaps a thousand young men, many of them well-to-do and well connected, meant a serious loss of trade and the severance of innumerable social ties. Two thousand citizens addressed a petition to the King, begging him to reconsider his decision. Upon the advice of Lola herself, it is credibly asserted, His Majesty yielded so far as to announce that the university would be closed for the summer term only.

The concession came too late, if it should have been made at all. All over Europe a terrific storm was brewing. By its first gusts the Bavarians were driven, like fallen leaves, unconscious of the force behind them. On the morning of February 11th, students and burghers took up arms, and assembling before the palace, clamoured for the expulsion of the Countess of Landsfeld and the immediate re-opening of the university. The feeling that revolution was in the air could alone have persuaded the King to surrender to a mob, which, being avowedly clerical and ultramontane, would hardly have proceeded to depose him by force. But surrender he did. "I will never give up Lola," he had vowed. Now he sent an order to her by an aide-de-camp to leave the

capital at once. It took some time to persuade her that he meant it. At last, with a shrug of the shoulders and a smile on her face, she left the house where for nearly a year she had directed the affairs of a kingdom. Accompanied by three of her faithful *Allemannen*, she drove to the station and boarded the Augsburg train—to alight at a wayside station only a few miles away. The rabble who had not dared to molest her in her retreat, wrecked her house. Some curious impulse led the King to the spot. Unheeded and apparently unrecognized, he was dealt a violent blow on the head, probably by a revolutionary agent, and crept back to his palace.

The next night, Lola, disguised in man's dress, slipped back into Munich and took refuge in the house of her loyal partizan, Berks. She sent word to Louis, confident of recovering her power if once she could see him. His answer was brought by two police agents. He would not see her, and regretted that he had not come to that decision before. The officials served her with a notice to quit Bavaria. Lola refused to obey till, it is said, they presented their pistols at her bosom—a gesture which, we may be quite sure, would not have frightened Lola Montez! She seems, however, to have been overpowered and kept in close custody; for instead of going to Lindau, as was reported, we now know that she was confined for a few days in the house of a mesmerist or exorcist named Julius Kerner, who had orders from the King to expel the witch or devil within her. It looks as if Louis himself had been mesmerized by his new clerical advisers. “They have told him,” writes the charlatan, “that she is possessed. Before treating her with magic and magnetism, I am trying the hunger cure. I allow her only thirteen drops of raspberry water, and the quarter



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of a wafer.” Later : “Lola has grown astonishingly thin. My son, Theobald, has mesmerized her, and I let her drink asses’ milk.”¹

Which would have been a more natural diet for the King of Bavaria. That the fiery, strong-minded Countess should have submitted to this unpleasant tomfoolery suggests some kind of hypnotic influence. Or she may have lingered at Kerner’s in the hope that Louis would change his mind. But before the month of February was over, she was safe across the Swiss frontier.

From her refuge at Berne, she beheld Europe in convulsion. On February 24th, Louis Philippe was hurled from his throne ; on March 2nd, Munich was again in insurrection, demanding the convocation of parliament. Again Louis yielded. Determined to get rid of him, the revolutionaries circulated a report that the Countess of Landsfeld had returned. The tumult was allayed only by the publication of a decree, withdrawing the rights of citizenship conferred on Lola and forbidding her ever to re-enter Bavaria. But now rioting broke out between the Liberals and the Ultramontanes. Weary of the whole comedy, Louis abdicated in favour of his son, Maximilian, on March 21st—six weeks after the dismissal of his favourite. He survived his abdication twenty years, dying at Nice in 1868.

IV

The republican wave sweeping over the Continent was distinctly a cold douche for a would-be Pompadour, and Lola had not succeeded in getting herself accepted as a protagonist of Liberalism. Still, had her political sympathies been as

¹ *Ein Vormärzliches Tanzidyll*. Fuchs (Berlin).

strong as she represents them, she might have emulated Théroigne de Méricourt by waving a red flag on the barricades of Paris or Milan. In England, too, the Chartists were busy ; yet when she returned to London in April, she turned her attention, not to politics, but again to the stage. The directors of Covent Garden conceived the ingenious idea of presenting her as herself in a dramatic version of the recent events in Munich—a scheme which was nipped in the bud by an over-cautious Lord Chamberlain. Nowadays, the heroine, who was still supposed to be a Spaniard, would surely have been deported as an undesirable alien and suspiciously Pink. In '48, however, the ex-King's ex-favourite was allowed to settle down, quite unmolested, at 27 Halfmoon Street, Mayfair. There "she invited a few men, including myself," writes the Hon. F. Leveson Gower, "to visit her in the evening. She had lost much of her good looks, but her animated conversation was entertaining." The journalist, George Augustus Sala, then a very young man, describes her, on the contrary, as a very handsome lady, "originally the wife of a solicitor," whom he met at a little cigar shop, under the pillars in Norreys Street, Haymarket. She invited him to write her life, starting with the fable that she was the daughter of the famous matador, Montes. Some of these particulars suggest that George's memory was slightly at fault. Lola also claimed acquaintance with Lord Brougham, who had a house in Grafton Street. Meanwhile, living on the spoils she had saved from the Bavarian shipwreck, she was taking stock of her position and prospects. She was now thirty, a mature age in Victorian times ; she must have realized that she was of no account as a dancer or an actress. Had she been alive to-day she would probably have started a hat shop in Bond Street or written a novel. Then, it is not

surprising that she should have sighed for the secure Ark of Matrimony.

Among the men who visited her was a callow subaltern of the Guards, Mr. George Trafford Heald, who upon coming of age in January, 1849, came into a fortune of six or seven thousand pounds a year. He is described as a tall young man, of juvenile figure and aspect, with straight hair, and small light brown downy moustache and whiskers, and a turned-up nose which gave him an air of great simplicity. He fell deeply in love with the Countess of Landsfeld, as older and wiser men had done, and being an Englishman, as a French chronicler sneers, offered her lawful marriage. Lola probably had no hesitation about accepting him. Doubtless she had been told that the decree of the Consistory Court did not entitle her to marry again, but she had now lost her status of British subject (legally she had no nationality after being deprived of Bavarian citizenship), and, in any case, could not reasonably be expected to remain celibate all her life because Lieutenant James did not choose to pursue his remedy in the House of Lords. Besides, she was used to taking risks. So she married Cornet Heald at St. George's, Hanover Square, on July 19th, 1849.

No one was more upset by the news than George's maiden aunt, Miss Susanna Heald, of Horncastle, Lincs., to which retreat the ill fame of the dreadful Countess had already penetrated. Certain facts having been communicated to her by Lola's innumerable ill-wishers, she set the law in motion, with the result, that on August 6th, as the Countess of Landsfeld was stepping into her carriage, she was addressed by two police officers, who told her that they held a warrant for arrest on a charge of bigamy, she having intermarried with Cornet Heald while her lawful husband, Lieutenant

James, was still alive. "I was divorced from him by Act of Parliament," she replied, immediately adding: "I don't know whether he is alive or not, and I don't care. I was married in a wrong name, and it wasn't a legal marriage. Lord Brougham was present when the divorce was granted, and Captain Osborne can prove it. What will the King say?" The last being one of those unintelligible, irrelevant expressions with which policemen invariably credit arrested persons.

The scene at Marlborough Street police court is thus described: "About half-past one, the Countess of Landsfeld, leaning on the arm of Mr. Heald, came into court and was accommodated with a seat in front of the Bar. Mr. Heald was also allowed to have a chair beside her. The lady appeared quite unembarrassed, and smiled several times as she made remarks to her husband. She was stated to be twenty-four years of age on the charge sheet, but has the look of a woman of at least thirty. She was dressed in black silk, with close-fitting black velvet jacket, a plain white straw bonnet trimmed with blue, and blue veil. In figure she is rather plump, and of middle height, of pale dark complexion, the lower part of the features symmetrical, the upper part not so good, owing to rather prominent cheek bones, but set off with a pair of unusually large blue eyes with long black lashes. Her reputed husband, Mr. Heald, during the whole of the proceedings, sat with the Countess's hand clasped in both of his own, occasionally giving it a fervent squeeze, and at particular parts of the evidence whispering to her with the fondest air, and pressing her hand to his lips with juvenile warmth."

The case was heard before Mr. Bingham. For the prosecution, Mr. Clarkson admitted that he was instructed by Miss Susanna Heald, and went on to state that Thomas James,

the prisoner's lawful husband, was alive in India on June 13th, thirty-six days before she had gone through a form of marriage with the Cornet. He asked for a remand, to which Lola's counsel stupidly agreed. But for the express admission of the defence, said the magistrate, that sufficient cause had been shown for further enquiry, he would not have held the prisoner, seeing that the proceedings were not countenanced by the person most interested (a person of full age and an officer in Her Majesty's forces), and that at any time between June 13th and the date of the second marriage, Mr. James might have perished by one of the casualties which beset life in a tropical climate and the military profession. He would now, however, grant a remand, and would liberate the accused upon her finding a thousand pounds bail and two other sureties of five hundred pounds each." Bail was immediately tendered and accepted. The Countess of Landsfeld and her husband were allowed to remain some time in court in order to elude the gaze of the crowd."

Her advocate's blunder cost Lola—or, more probably, Heald—two thousand pounds. It is not stated that she boxed his ears or tore his whiskers. Apparently she did not share the magistrate's view that her legal husband might have been carried off by war or pestilence, for on the day after her appearance in court, she and Heald took themselves out of the jurisdiction and departed for the Continent. As she did not surrender to her bail the following October, by which time, presumably, proof of James's continued existence was forthcoming, her bail was estreated and the sureties found by Messrs. Davies, solicitors, also forfeited. One hopes these unfortunate gentlemen were indemnified by Mr. Heald.

For the next year Lola's movements cannot be traced with certainty. She and Heald lived together for some time ;

she somewhere refers to the marriage as another unfortunate experience in matrimony. She emerges on our view a much coarser woman, not the one, I imagine, with whom Louis of Bavaria loved to converse, one in whom the "merry unaffected girl" of Simla could no longer have been recognised. Men, as often happens, she had learned to despise precisely because of the passions to which she deliberately made her appeal; they wanted her body and she wanted their money. And the proceedings at Marlborough Street definitely extinguished any hopes she might have had of returning to the paths of domestic respectability. She saw herself a vagabond upon the earth, her hand being turned too readily against every man. The virago was always now uppermost in her.

Mirecourt, a wholly unreliable writer of the late 'fifties, says that she took Heald first to Spain—the last country in which she would have risked herself! Probably they were in Paris all this time. The Cornet's juvenile fondness had evaporated, and he was always, we are told, running away. On one occasion, Lola, it is said, advertised for him as for a lost dog, and on another occasion had to pursue him as far as Boulogne. "Claudius Jacquand painted them both together, the husband presenting his wife with a rich parure of diamonds. When a definite rupture of their relations was decided upon, Heald wished the canvas to be cut in two, as he objected to appearing beside Lola. She, however, obtained possession of the picture in its entirety, and kept it in her room with its face turned to the wall. 'My husband,' she explained, 'ought not to see everything I do—it wouldn't be decent.'"

A long report borrowed by the London from the Paris newspapers added somewhat to the gaiety of nations in

August, 1850. Lola had taken a villa from a M. Rosa on a fifteen years' lease, and had furnished it, on credit, with the utmost splendour. Upon the day appointed for payment the tradesmen were politely asked to call again, as her husband was temporarily absent. Meanwhile, she had made all her preparations for removing the furniture. Informed that vans were being loaded at her door, the enraged creditors (among whom was Jacquand, the painter) returned in their numbers, bringing a commissary of police along with them. They wanted their money on the spot. They should have it, the Countess replied, as soon as she could find the key of her cashbox. Not being able to find it, she departed in search of a locksmith. But neither lady nor locksmith came back. Lola was seen to enter a carriage which was waiting at the Barrière de l'Étoile and disappeared.

Just a year later, two ladies were observed to be fighting like wild cats in a carriage near the Arc de Triomphe. The one who seemed to be getting the best of it was finally dragged away by some passers by. The defeated lady proved to be Lola Montez. Everyone expressed his surprise that she had not come off the victor in a kind of encounter to which she was supposed to be well accustomed.

By this time young Heald had evidently slipped his cable and got clean away. Otherwise, Lola would hardly have been at shifts for money. The ill-starred young man, according to Mirecourt, lost his life soon after, while rowing on the Tagus, off Lisbon.

Lola was left with no other capital than her notoriety. A man named Roux got hold of her, and she went on a tour through various towns in France, Belgium, and Germany. Prussia she was forbidden to enter. In November, '51, Roux was suing her for eight thousand francs, damages for breach

of contract, before the civil court in Paris. She refused, he alleged, to fulfil engagements he had made for her. Lola's defence was vigorous. First of all, she complained that she had been shockingly overworked by her taskmaster. She had been forced to dance so often that she had fallen exhausted on the stage. On one occasion, he got her out of bed at 4 a.m. to start on a journey. All the while he treated her as his private property and made her ridiculous by the tales he spread about her. Among other things, he said she could speak Chinese, Persian, and Hindustani, and had attracted the particular notice of the Rajah of Nepal. He had alluded to her efforts to reform the Jesuits. (Roars of laughter in court). In fact, he had treated her so badly that the court dismissed his suit and mulcted him in costs.

The Countess of Landsfeld had already signed a contract with an American impresario named Willis, and on November 20th, 1851, she sailed for New York aboard the s.s. *Humboldt*.

V

The *Humboldt* reached New York on December 5th, 1851, and was greeted by a salute of twenty-one guns—fired, not in honour of the Countess of Landsfeld, but of the Hungarian leader, Kossuth, who had also turned his face westward. There was no Ellis Island in those days, no exclusion of foreigners on grounds of moral turpitude or democratic opinions. America was really the land of the free. Nowadays, neither patriot nor adventuress would have been suffered to set foot on its soil. It is strange in these anything-but-spacious days to read that Kossuth was received by the New Yorkers with frantic enthusiasm and public rejoicings. But Lola was by no means overlooked. She was at once

interviewed by the reporters, who were surprised to find her not a robust virago but a beautiful woman, rather slim in stature, with high cheek-bones which gave "a Moorish appearance to her face."

The America of those days was the America of "Martin Chuzzlewit." General Choke, Col. Diver, and Jefferson Brick were among its most prominent citizens. With extraordinary discernment, Lola took the measure of these people. She made no attempt to exploit their passions, but flattered their childlike national vanity, hailing their Great Country as the "stupendous asylum of the world's unfortunates and last refuge of the victims of the tyranny and wrongs of the Old World." "God grant," she devoutly prays, "that it may ever stand, the noblest column of liberty that was ever reared beneath the arch of heaven!" She acquiesced in their self-righteousness, and practising on their ignorance of European affairs, represented herself as an injured, much misunderstood woman, the martyr of liberty and the victim of Jesuitical intrigues.

No amount of judicious flattery, however, could blind the American public to the stranger's shortcomings as an actress and a dancer. Out of curiosity, indeed, they flocked to see her in a musical comedy, entitled *Betly the Tyrolean*, specially written for her, at the Broadway Theatre; but by January 19th, 1852, the piece had been withdrawn. After visits to Philadelphia and Albany, she appeared again at the Broadway in a dramatized version of her own career written by C. P. T. Ware. The play ran five nights only. To supplement her resources, Lola advertised receptions, to which anyone on payment of a dollar was admitted for the space of a quarter of an hour, to shake her by the hand and converse with her in English, French, German, or Spanish. There were, of course,

any number of people in New York ready and willing to pay considerably more than a dollar for the privilege of shaking hands with a real European celebrity, and a Countess, to boot.

We next hear of her at New Orleans. Her agent caused it to be announced in the local papers that the Countess of Landsfeld was distributing alms in abundance to the poor, the sick, and the captive, to make amends for her misspent life. "This announcement having produced its effect, the newspapers went on to inform the public that the famous Countess was about to enter religion—the best informed went so far as to name the day on which she would take the veil. But on the appointed day, readers were startled by a third item of news! Yielding to the inconstancy natural to her sex, Señora Lola Montez is announced to have chosen the Opera instead of the Cloister. That evening the theatre was crowded to suffocation, and the receipts were enormous."¹

The Creole City was at that time crowded with gold-seekers returning from or going to California. Lola acted upon Horace Greeley's oft-repeated advice to the young man. She went West—by way of Greytown and Nicaragua, she informs us, and not by Panama, the route she is said to have followed in a book by Russell, the war correspondent, entitled *The Adventures of Mrs. Seacole*. Lola refers to this audacious romance in her little autobiography, and quotes the following passage only to stigmatize it as an impudent lie from start to finish: "Occasionally, some distinguished passengers passed on the upward and downward tides of ruffianism and rascality that swept periodically through Cruces. Came one day Lola Montez, in the full zenith of her evil fame, bound for

¹ Only a few weeks prior to the time of writing, a well-known film star circulated the same report in the same city.

California with a strange suite. A good-looking, bold woman, with fine bad eyes and a determined bearing, dressed ostentatiously in perfect male attire, with shirt collar turned down over a velvet-lapelled coat, richly-worked shirt-front, black hat, French unmentionables [trousers?], and natty polished boots with spurs. She carried in her hand a handsome riding-whip, which she could use as well in the streets of Cruces as in the towns of Europe; for an impertinent American, presuming, perhaps not unnaturally, on her reputation, laid hold jestingly of the tails of her long coat, and, as a lesson, received a cut across his face that must have marked him for some days."

Arrived at San Francisco, Lola invented an advertising dodge since repeated by stage stars all the world over.¹ She declared that her jewels had been stolen. Having thus focused attention upon herself, she then went on a tour through the mining camps. On the journey out, she had become acquainted with the editor of the *San Francisco Whig*, a young man named Patrick Purdy Hull. On July 1st, 1853, she went through the form of marriage with him at the Dolores mission-church, in presence of a number of the usual "prominent citizens." "The bride and groom" adds the newspaper report, "have since visited Sacramento, and are now in domestic retirement at San Francisco."

Bigamy has an ugly sound to European ears, but Lola no doubt hesitated to shock American morality by living with a man without a licence. Such scruples did not trouble her long, however, for she seems very soon to have discarded Hull and to have taken in his stead a German doctor, named Adler,

¹ Communicated by the late Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge, who, I understand, was a midshipman aboard one of H.M.'s ships visiting Californian waters at the time.

who was hunting in the Sacramento valley. Before she had time to tire of him, the hunter was killed by accident. Lola, her capacity for love and passion by now, I suspect, exhausted, made herself a home at Grass Valley, a lawless mining camp among the foothills. Here she was discovered by a newspaper reporter, "living a quiet and apparently cosy life, surrounded by her pet birds, dogs, goats, sheep, hens, turkeys, pigs, and her pony. The latter seems to be a favourite with Lola, and is her companion in her mountain rambles. Surely it is a strange metamorphosis to find the woman who has gained a world-wide notoriety, and has played a part upon the stage of life with powerful potentates, and with whose name Europe and the world is familiar, finally settled down at home in the mountain wilds of California."

And she might have remained there had not a fire swept away the town of Grass Valley and with it her little homestead. She was without money, her four-footed friends were dispersed. It may be, however, that she was not very sorry to find herself obliged to take the road again.

Gold had been discovered in Australia, so across the Pacific she went. Had a route been opened just then to the planet Saturn, Lola Montez would surely have followed it. Even to Sydney, then unconnected by the telegraph with the rest of the world and distant a three months' journey from Europe, she found that her fame had extended. She was engaged to appear at the Victoria Theatre on August 23rd, 1855, in the four-act drama, *Lola Montez in Bavaria*. The theatre was crowded to capacity. "The Countess looked charming, and acted very archly. She was cheered vociferously and called before the curtain, when she delivered a short address. Mr. Lambert (well known in London) created quite a sensation as the King of Bavaria (by which name he

is now known), and at the end of the performance, the Countess presented him with a bundle of cigarettes—a very great compliment, as she is a very great smoker, and seldom gives any cigars away."¹

This particular play ran only four nights. On August 27th, Lola appeared in *Yelva*, a drama which she had translated from the French.

On September 6th she took a benefit, playing in *The Follies of a Night* and two farces. Into one of these she introduced her "Spider Dance," which so much outraged colonial opinion. It is possible that the woman was naturally inclined to impropriety; it is equally possible that not possessing any talent as an actress or dancer, she resorted to it as an advertising expedient. The same shamelessness availed her upon her departure from Sydney. A dispute had arisen between her and another member of the company, who issued a writ of attachment against her. Brown, the sheriff, going on board the steamer to arrest her, found she had locked herself in her cabin. When the vessel was well under way, she sent word that he could arrest her if he liked, but that she was quite naked and would refuse to put on any clothes. "Poor Brown," we are told, "blushed and retired, and was put ashore at the Heads, twenty miles from Sydney, to be greeted on his return to the city with roars of laughter."

Lola reached Melbourne when the gold-fever was at its height. There was a strong element of crime and lawlessness, but Victorian propriety was nice. She had to cut out the objectionable features of her dance. At Geelong she was threatened with prosecution "in the name of an outraged community." "She is certainly a very singular character," writes the *Era* correspondent, "but there is ever a lively and

¹ *Era*, January 6th, 1856.

brusque style in her action that seems to catch general approbation for the time being."

At Ballarat, on the diggings, occurred the celebrated fracas with Mr. Seekamp. This man was the editor of the local newspaper, and upon Lola's arrival in the town, he printed an exceedingly defamatory account of her career. A few days later he happened to call at the hotel where the adventuress had put up. Hearing he was there, she ran downstairs and attacked him with a horse-whip. He, also, had a whip with which he lustily defended himself. Before long the two had closed and had each other literally by the hair. The delighted bystanders at last interposed, and the two were separated, but not before life-preservers and revolvers had been produced. At the theatre that evening Lola was cheered by the miners, and coming down to the footlights, spoke as follows : " I thank you most sincerely for your friendship. I regret to be obliged to refer again to Mr. Seekamp, but it is not my fault, as he again in this morning's paper repeated his attack upon me. You have heard of the scene which took place this afternoon. Mr. Seekamp threatens to continue his charges against my character. I offered, though a woman, to meet him with pistols ; but the coward who could beat a woman ran from a woman. He says he will drive me off the diggings ; but I will change the tables and make Seekamp decamp. (Applause.) My good friends, again I thank you."

Some weeks later, the editor, bruised and humiliated, gleefully announced that Lola had met her match. Quarrelling with a manager named Crosby, she was about to resort to violence, when Mrs. Crosby intervened, and thrashed Lola so soundly that her whip broke. The two women then threw themselves upon each other, and had to be torn apart, each probably carrying off handfuls of the other's hair.

Seekamp (not an unimpeachable authority) delightedly concludes: “At last this terrible virago has found, not her master, but her mistress, and for many a long day will be incapable of performing at any theatre.”

It is not unlikely that Lola was taught a severe lesson after this fashion, for henceforward she ceases to appear as a fighter. Her movements in the year 1856 I cannot trace. Mirecourt quotes an unintelligible letter dated from St. Jean de Luz in the September of that year. I am inclined to dismiss this, however, as a farcical forgery, since we find her again in America at the beginning of '57, and it would scarcely have been worth while to go all round the world from Australia to get there. Appearing at Albany, she gave proof of her daredevil courage, by crossing the Hudson in an open skiff among the floating ice-blocks. “She got over in safety, but part of her wardrobe was carried downstream. By going to Troy, she could have avoided all danger, but her love of notoriety led her to offer a hundred dollars to be carried across here.”

The United States she now regarded as her home. It is notable that the Americans were almost the only people to whom she did not become sooner or later definitely obnoxious. Disliked in England, hated in Germany, sneered at in France, and attacked in Australia, she got on very well with the Yankees. This is the more remarkable when we consider the opposition between her character and the puritanical bent of the republican mind. That bias she may have been enabled to understand by her training among the Presbyterians of Montrose. Her experience shows that no one is so unpopular as not to be able to find a measure of sympathy and liking somewhere or other on this earth. But that spot is frequently discovered too late. The old man in the poem died, we remember, and—“never had seen Carcassonne!”

Lola had now had nearly forty years of life. The rolling stone had gathered no moss in the shape of friends or money. Her notoriety had staled ; it was a little late to revive it by further amorous adventures or new prowess with the horse-whip. Already a kind of despair had possessed her. In a diary written three years afterwards, we read that she "cried aloud in agony to be taken." In this mood she sought consolation in the new cult of spiritualism. Suddenly she proclaimed that, like Joan of Arc, she had heard voices. They told her to give up the stage. Wishful now to give her fellows the moral benefit of her diverse experiences, she appeared as a lecturer at different places of worship in New York. "Lola Montez at Hope Chapel is good," chuckles a reporter in February, 1858. "It is plain that the scent of the roses hangs round her still. We have heard some queer things in that conventicle in our time, and have now and then assisted at an entertainment there twice as funny, but not half so intellectual nor half so wholesome as the lecture our desperado in dimity gave us last night."

The intellectual quality of the lectures is not apparent in those published that same year, together with her "autobiography." If inspired by the spirits, they afford another illustration of the degeneration of the human intelligence after death. But they may have suffered in transcription by the Rev. Chauncey Burr, who was acting as Lola's impresario at the time. Here and there their dullness is lightened by a sparkle of her native wit or a keen observation that only her own experience could have supplied. Sometimes the lecture begins with what is unmistakably an exposition of her own views and winds up with some trite moralizing calculated to please her chapel audience. Her attack upon Roman Catholicism is not a valuable contribution to theological polemics.

“America,” she concludes, “does not yet recognize how much she owes to the Protestant principle. It has given the world the four greatest facts of modern times—steamboats, railroads, telegraphs, and the American Republic !”

The reformed adventuress was taken so seriously and sympathetically in the United States that she resolved to carry the light of her wisdom to the peoples of the Old World. She landed at Galway on November 23rd, 1858, not having set foot in her native land since she left it, the bride of Lieut. James, twenty years before. She addressed curious audiences at the Round Room, Dublin, but her success was crabbed by a long article in *The Freeman*, dealing with her connexions with Dujarier and Louis of Bavaria. At the new year, she crossed over to England, beginning her tour at Manchester. She drew large audiences at Sheffield, Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Leamington, Worcester, Bristol, and Bath. Of course, she disappointed the public, who wanted to see the dashing, dare-devil adventuress, not a rather sad woman, tinged with Yankee religiosity. In London, she lectured at St. James’s Hall. For the impression she made on her audience, we may refer to the *Era*, under date April 10th, 1859 : “The Lola Montez who made a graceful and impressive obeisance to those who gave her on Thursday night so cordial and encouraging a reception, appeared simply as a good-looking lady in the bloom of womanhood, attired in a plain black dress, with easy unrestrained manners, and speaking earnestly and distinctly, with the slightest touch of a foreign accent that might belong to any language from Irish to Bavarian[!]. The subject selected by the fair lecturer was the distinction between the English and the American character, which she proceeded to demonstrate by a discourse decidedly didactic rather than

diverting. There was no attempt to weave into the subject a few threads of personal interest, no mention of any incident that had happened to her, and no anecdote that might have enlivened the dissertation in any way. A more inoffensive entertainment could hardly be imagined . . . the impression left on the departing visitors must have been that of having spent an hour in company with a well-informed lady who had gone to America and, coming back, had had over the tea-table the talk of the evening to herself. Whatever the future disquisitions of the Countess of Landsfeld may be, there is little doubt that many will go to hear them for the sake of the peculiar celebrity of the lecturer."

That peculiar celebrity was no longer a matter of pride or secret gratification to its possessor. Lola, in the language of the evangelicals, was now converted. Usually, penitents of her sort who have been connected with the stage are attracted to the Roman Church, but Lola found spiritual consolation in the less picturesque Methodist communion. To-day she might have been exhibited as a brand plucked from the burning on a Salvation Army platform. There can be no doubt about her sincerity. That is vouched for by the clergymen who knew her and by the extracts they have furnished from a sort of spiritual diary kept by her while touring in this country. Here are some specimens : " Oh, I dare not think of the past. What have I not been ? I lived only for my own passions ; and what is there of good even in the best natural human being ? What would I not give to have my terrible and fearful experience given as an awful warning to such natures as my own ? What has the world ever given to me ? (And I have known *all* that the world has to give—*all* !) Nothing but shadows, leaving a wound on the heart hard to heal—a dark discontent. . . . I once used to think that heaven

was a place somewhere beyond the clouds, and that those who got there were as if they had not been themselves upon the earth. But life has been given to me to know that heaven begins in the human soul, through the grace of God and His holy word. Those who cannot find something of heaven here will never find it hereafter.

"To-morrow, the Lord's Day, is the day of peace and happiness: Once it seemed to me anything but a happy day, but now all is wonderfully changed in my heart. . . . What I loved before, now I hate. Three years ago, I cried in agony to be taken; and yet the great, the All-wise Creator has spared me in His mercy to repent. All that has passed in New York is not illusion. I feel it is true. To-morrow is Sunday, and I shall go to the poor little humble chapel, and mingle my prayers with the fervent pastor, and with the good and true. The honest Methodist breathes forth a sincere prayer, and I feel much unity of soul. What would I give to have daily fellowship with these good people—to teach in the school, to visit the sick, the old, the poor. But that will be in the Lord's good time, when self is burned out of me completely."

The following is dated from London: "Since last week my existence is entirely changed. When last I wrote, I was calm and peaceful—away from the world. Now, I must go forth again. It was cruel, indeed, of Mr. E. to have said what he did; but I am afraid I was too hasty also. Ought I to have resented what was said? No, I ought not to have said a word. The world would applaud me; but, oh, my heart tells me, that for His sake I ought to bear the vilest reproaches, even unmerited. . . . But I will not look back. Onward, must be the cry of my heart. Lord, have mercy on the weary wanderer."

Who was Mr. E. ?—a man whom she was beginning to love ?

In the next year (1860), if not earlier, she was back in New York. Lola the saint was no more thrifty than Lola the sinner. The large takings of her British tour were soon spent, and with a mind tormented by remorse and religious doubt, she could not turn her thoughts to the question of making a livelihood. Then, one day, in the street, she met an old friend of her far-off Montrose days, now the wife of a well-to-do florist named Buchanan. To Lola, of whom ministers of state had humbly craved speech in Bavaria thirteen years before, the middle-class lady's recognition of her seemed an act of enormous condescension and Christian charity. The Buchanans were really good kind folk. They made a canny investment of the ex-adventuress's remaining capital, assuring her a small income for life ; and Mrs. Buchanan steered her across the deep and troubled waters of Methodism into the calm haven of the American Episcopal Church.

Probably the true friendship which she now tasted almost for the first time had as much to do with the happiness of her last year as religion. Convinced that she was soon to die, she spent a lot of time reading the Bible, and " with a heart full of sympathy for the poor outcasts of her own sex, she devoted the last few months of her life to visiting them at the Magdalen Asylum, near New York, warning them and instructing them. She strove to impress upon them not only the awful guilt of breaking the divine law, but the inevitable earthly sorrow which those who persisted in sinful courses were treasuring up for themselves."

Thus, her last spiritual adviser, the Rev. F. L. Hawks, who was with her at her death, in the forty-third year of her age, at the Astoria Sanatorium, New York, on January 17th, 1861.

Countess of Landsfeld, Baroness Rosenthal, canoness of the Order of St. Theresa, sometime ruler of the kingdom of Bavaria, she was buried in Greenwood Cemetery under a stone engraved : " Mrs. Eliza Gilbert, born 1818, died 1861." At the last, by her own instructions one must presume, the husband of her youth was repudiated. And so was " Lola Montez," whom she wanted the world to forget.

Eventually, no doubt it will. Meantime, the adventuress is sure to find more admirers and sympathisers than the evangelical penitent. Even to " the poor outcasts of her own sex," their converted " sister " must have seemed a not wholly unenviable person. The terms in which she spoke of her past were absurdly exaggerated. I cannot find that she harmed anybody very much, except by an occasional wallop. James carried her off and married her when she was too young to know her own mind. Louis of Bavaria would have lost his crown in '48 if he had never met her. Heald of the turned-up nose seems to have been the only one of her men who really came to grief through her, and I daresay he thought her beauty worth the price. She forgot—as they forgot—the happiness she must have procured her lovers.

Besides, the world treated her unkindly. From the moment the Consistory Court pronounced that iniquitous decree of separation without divorce, she was driven before the harsh wind of circumstance. Tracing her career, step by step, I find that necessity virtually dictated every thing she did. She became an adventuress for the same reason that people write books (or review them), go on the Stock Exchange, and sing in the streets—she had to live somehow. It must often have vexed her that she was no actress, no dancer. Turned thirty, she would have preferred to settle down as a respectable married woman. For Lola Montez was extraordinary only

by her beauty and physical courage. In girlhood she may have been rather more carnally inclined than it was then thought proper for young ladies to be, but passion had not much to do with her later adventures.

On the whole, she had no reason to complain of life. She had a fine, exciting, flamboyant time. Instead of bemoaning her past, she should have risen up from the banquet of life, thanking the giver for such varied fare and sparkling wine.

LA GRANDE THERESE

(THÉRÈSE HUMBERT)

THERE is something, the sage observes, in the misfortunes of others which is not exactly disagreeable to us. Certainly, at the time, not so long distant, to which the career of Thérèse Humbert belongs, the English were disposed to regard the troubles of their French neighbours more with amusement than sympathy. We were moved to a certain complacency. The Panama scandal, l'affaire Dreyfus, reflected on the government of France ; and was not that government republican ? Such things, our Press discreetly hinted, could never take place in a country ruled by Queen Victoria with the assistance of the House of Lords and a House of Commons to which no Labour man had yet penetrated—no one added that if such things did take place over here, the powers would take excellent care that the public should not hear about them. In this country, every pressman carries a peer's coronet in his knapsack, and is, therefore, properly interested in upholding the existing order of things. But in unhappy France, as much is to be gained by attacking the government as by upholding it. Authority is treated more to criticism than respect. In every *cause célèbre* the politician and the newspaper man hope to find some stick with which to beat the ministry of the day. And the Third Republic having survived the two preceding scandals, it is not to be wondered at that

its enemies raked desperately in Mme. Humbert's safe for such a weapon—as safes in our own country have been broken open and examined by authority itself with a not dissimilar end in view.

In English-speaking countries, it is the charge of unchastity which is fatal to the public man. One remembers Parnell and Dilke. For the grafter and convicted swindler, on the other hand, provided he beats the big drum of patriotism and lives “cleanly” (or apparently so), a large measure of sympathy is reserved. Not so in France. There, probity is of all virtues the most essential and the most esteemed; dishonesty of all vices the most contemned. That is why frauds like the Humberts' are so eagerly exploited by the partisan publicist.

“The Humbert Millions”—the caption cannot have been forgotten by middle-aged people if any such remain in this rejuvenate world. In the last decade of the last century it was impossible to open a newspaper without seeing the names Humbert and Crawford. These people seemed, like Queen Victoria, to be immortal. Nobody, over here at all events, knew what it was all about—except a few *illuminati*, like Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and some experts who had forsaken all other matters to study it. The Jarndyce case was simplicity itself compared with l'affaire Humbert, even as it lacked that dramatic *dénouement* which disclosed “la grande Thérèse” as the most brilliant and ingenious swindler the Old World at least has ever seen.

Her genesis impelled her towards the brooding Nemesis. The story really begins in the year 1801, when a male infant was found in the church of Notre Dame de la Garde, at Toulouse. He was brought up by the municipality, and at the age of fifteen, either in accordance with the circumstances

of his finding or because religion was once more in the ascendant, was put out to service with a priest, by whom he was trained as a sacristan. No doubt, as foundlings must do, he often speculated about his origin ; and when at the mature age of thirty-eight, he was publicly acknowledged as her natural son by a jeweller's wife, who had formerly borne the name of Daurignac, he seems to have been disappointed and hinted that he was really the son of a much more important mother. What he did the next sixteen years is not known. In '55, we find him at the southern village of Aussonne, in the Haute-Garonne, the owner of the estate of Oeillet, worth seventy thousand francs. The purchase seems to have exhausted his fluid capital, for he was known as a shabby cranky old fellow, always dressed in a battered silk hat and threadbare frock coat, in which he used to dig his garden and cultivate his cabbage patches. Though conspicuous for his attendance at church he professed to being something of a sorcerer—dabbled, in fact, in “white magic.” Occasionally a priest, Spanish or Portuguese, used to visit him. One of these days, old Daurignac gave it to be understood he was to inherit vast wealth from this ecclesiastic.

He had expectations, of a less creditable sort, from another direction. His wife, a Mlle. Capella, was believed in the village to be the daughter of a rich miserly farmer named Duluc, whose wealth she hoped to inherit. She was disappointed, and the Daurignacs had to bring up as best they could their family of seven children.

One of these was Thérèse, born in '55 or '56. A glance at the looking-glass and (probably) the assurances of her family, must early have satisfied her that she was not cut out for a Ninon de Lanclos or Du Barry. She was a coarse, stubby country wench, with a thickened tongue and an ugly

Gascon accent. With any other parentage she might have resigned herself to the lot of a peasant's wife, but her labours, like those of her brothers and sisters, were lightened by the continued recital of her parents' great expectations. There was a fortune which ought to have come to her mother ; a fortune which ought to have come to her father from his mother ; best of all, a fortune which would surely come one day from that mysterious visitor from the other side of the Pyrenees. It was hard for the co-heiress of millions to go on day after day wearing *espadrilles* and grubbing up carrots. So one can hardly condemn Thérèse for anticipating her heritage by imitating her father's signature, as she is said to have done on one occasion, and while she was at school, for continually borrowing jewellery and trinkets from the other girls to adorn herself with—articles which she invariably returned. Wishful to shine as a pianist, she learned to play a single piece perfectly. Having played this, and being invited to give a further exhibition of her skill, she would feign bashfulness and refuse to play unless the lights were lowered ; whereupon, by pre-arrangement, her teacher would take her place at the piano and allow her to reap the applause for her performance. Thérèse must have had a very complaisant teacher. In her late teens she planned and successfully executed a swindle which gave promise of her genius. Approaching various tradesmen in Toulouse, she made out that she was being forced into marriage with a young man of good family at Bordeaux—"being forced into marriage" was a happy and original touch ; but since she had to marry him, she must get a trousseau, and she hadn't any ready money. And with the trousseau the confiding tradesmen, some of whom probably wouldn't have lent a friend five francs to save him from suicide, supplied her.

As it happened, Thérèse was only anticipating events. At Beauzelles, a little country seat close to Oeillet, dwelt the Humberts, a family of oppressive respectability. Gustave Humbert, the head of the house, was a stern, incorruptible republican of the old Roman type, who had been disgraced by Napoleon III for his attachment to the principles of the Revolution, and was held in much esteem among his neighbours in consequence. Appointed professor of Roman law at Toulouse in 1859, he was returned as deputy for the Haute-Garonne upon the establishment of the Third Republic, and had since been elected a life senator. Mme. Humbert said she first met Thérèse at her father's farm and bought a cask of wine from her. Evidently the shrewd girl found some means of following up the acquaintance thus begun, for soon after the Daurignacs had moved to Toulouse, upon the death of her mother, Frédéric, the Humberts' son, declared himself to be in love with her. The young man was only a law student and nineteen years of age. Thérèse falsely represented herself to be only a year older. "If at first," says Mme. Humbert, "my husband and I raised some objections on the score of the difference in age and social position, we very soon gave in. Gustave and I remembered our own modest beginning, which had not prevented our being happy and reaching a decent position. Frédéric had no fortune. Thérèse said she had three hundred thousand francs. We did not enquire into this, since she assured us that she did not want any marriage contract, and would throw her fortune into the common fund, so it did not seem that our son was running any risk." The Humberts were not, in fact, rich—the republican virtues are not profitable; the good lady might as well have admitted in so many words that she and her husband consented to the marriage because they were tempted

by Mlle. Daurignac's money. As to Thérèse, no doubt the social position of Frédéric's family attracted her, but she may quite possibly have been in love with him. As a wife, she remained always faithful and blameless. The most delightful thing that had ever happened in her whole life to her, she told a friend, was when she and Frédéric, after twenty-five years of marriage, on dining at a bohemian restaurant, were mistaken by the waiter for a pair of clandestine lovers and locked in a private room to secure them from imagined spies and jealous consorts.

The marriage took place in 1878. Within the next year or two Thérèse got rid of an unsympathetic sister, Marie Louise, by marrying her to Frédéric's brother, Louis-Joseph, while Frédéric's sister, Alice, paired with her more pliant brother, Emile. At the beginning of the 'eighties, we find both the Humbert families established in Paris. Thérèse and her husband started life in a modest way in the Rue Monge, which the wife furnished, as she told her mother-in-law, out of her fortune, but, in reality, on credit. She now tried her peculiar skill on the Parisians. There was a widow, Delattre, living in the same house. Worming her way into the poor woman's confidence, Thérèse learned that she owned some shares of considerable value in the Malfidano mines. "Oh, my dear, they are quite worthless!" she exclaimed. "Let me get rid of them for you before it is too late." The widow thereupon parted with her shares for a trifling sum, to learn soon after that they had risen considerably in value. Taxed with the swindle, Thérèse, we are told, laughed in the face of her dupe. Mme. Delattre, however, with a Frenchwoman's tenacity, resorted to law, and in the long run got her money back.

The dominant passion of Thérèse Humbert was always the

get-rich-quick passion of the American, not the penurious hoarding passion of the French peasant. The birth of her only child, Eve, in 1880, would, of course, have stimulated her ambition. To what extent her husband was in her confidence it is difficult to estimate. He was, at all events, completely under her thumb. His parents she managed to keep as far as possible at a distance ; though it was precisely in old Père Humbert's promotion to cabinet rank, as Minister of Justice in the Freycinet Administration, that she saw her great chance. It is alleged that she promised to secure the influence of her father-in-law on behalf of a deserter, on condition that the young man's wealthy father lent her £28,000 by way of mortgage on a property called Marcotte, the existence of which remained doubtful. The price was paid ; but the deserter was arrested and held for trial all the same. The father protested. There had been a hitch somewhere, Thérèse airily admitted ; but for another few hundred thousand francs she would put that right and obtain a pardon. She got the money, and this time delivered the goods. The bribe, it is said, formed the purchase money of her estate of Celeyran, in the south, which, in the course of the succeeding years, she mortgaged over and over again, to the total extent of £480,000. In this story there is a reflection on the honour of Gustave Humbert, so it is only fair to say that it is not entirely corroborated.

It was not by any abuse of his trust by the senator, but thanks to the enormous respectability of him and his family that Thérèse was able to promote the greatest swindle of modern times. Her childish dreams had been haunted, we know, by a mysterious Portuguese priest. His ghost was not laid but stalked abroad, divested of cope and cassock. Even before the birth of her child, Mme. Humbert, junior, told

her housekeeper, Mme. Parayre, a strange story of a Portuguese millionaire whom she had succoured when he was taken suddenly ill in the streets of Toulouse and who, out of gratitude, had left her his immense wealth by means of a will written on a marble tablet. In Toulouse itself this yarn when circulated only made people laugh. They recalled Thérèse's earlier performances. Presently, the Portuguese developed into an American millionaire, which sounded more plausible. At one time or another, it is impossible to say when, it was let drop that the millionaire's kindness was inspired by something deeper than gratitude—that he had been the lover of Thérèse's mother. So the legend grew. The senator heard it and let it be known that the young couple had great expectations. Whereupon one of his friends offered to lend them sixty thousand francs, an offer which, we need not doubt, was accepted.

Thus encouraged, as we may believe, Thérèse began to borrow more and more on the strength of her expectations. The story was given a more definite shape. The rumours hitherto in circulation were corrected. It was not in the streets of Toulouse but in a train entering Nice that Thérèse, then unmarried, had met and befriended the American millionaire, whose name was Robert Henry Crawford. The younger Humberts moved to a fine mansion, No. 65 Avenue de la Grande Armée, which was leased to them by the agents of the proprietor, Comte Branicki. The Comte himself had left France, disgusted with the political atmosphere. His agents did not insist on spot cash, but were content to accept bills from the opulent and respectable purchasers. Still, creditors began to press for their money, and Thérèse had to put them off on the ground that she had not yet entered into actual possession of her great heritage. Why was this?

When would the inheritance materialize? The time had come for a full explanation.

That explanation was forthcoming. The will by which the deceased millionaire had bequeathed four millions sterling to Thérèse was dated Nice, September 6th, 1877. But before it could be given effect to, the legatee, now Mme. Frédéric Humbert, was called upon by two foreign gentlemen of the most correct appearance, who introduced themselves as Henry and Robert Crawford, the nephews of the testator. Before Mme. Humbert and her husband they displayed another will also dated from Nice on September 6th, 1877, but alas ! of very different tenour from the other. It was worded as follows : “ This is my will. I direct that upon my death, my estate shall be divided in three equal parts, between Mlle. Marie Daurignac, my nephew Henry Crawford, and my nephew Robert Crawford, provided that these three persons shall invest in the French Funds sums sufficient to procure to Thérèse Daurignac an annuity of thirty thousand francs a month. (Signed) Robert Henry Crawford.”

Marie Daurignac was Thérèse's youngest sister, said to be then under sixteen years of age. It must have seemed odd that she should have been preferred by the millionaire to the girl who had come to his assistance in the train ; but at this point, doubtless, the hearers remembered that other rumour of a real relationship between the Daurignac girls and the late Mr. Crawford, and were disposed to dismiss the train episode as a delicate invention of Mme. Humbert's to cover up a family scandal. To proceed—as there were no means of determining which was the later will, both wills were legally void, and the nephews as next-of-kin might have claimed the estate free of any charges or conditions whatever. But the

Americans had seven or eight millions of their own and could afford to be magnanimous. Animated by profound respect for their late uncle and aware of his interest in the Daurignac family, they proposed a compromise. Mlle. Marie should marry one or other of them. At this Thérèse wrung her hands. Her sister was an innocent *jeune fille*—never would she be guilty of the indelicacy of submitting such a proposal to her. The question seems to have been debated some time, even years, since it was not till 1883 that a truce was concluded between the parties on the following terms : “ All title deeds and securities constituting the assets of Mr. Crawford’s estate are sequestered and placed in charge of M. and Mme. Humbert, under their responsibility, until, upon the majority of Mlle. Daurignac, either all the heirs designated in the two wills shall have come to an amicable compromise, or in default of such a compromise, the courts shall have finally pronounced upon the rights of each. Until one or other settlement has been effected, M. and Mme. Humbert undertake to preserve the securities committed to their charge. On no pretext whatever shall they dispose of these securities, mortgage them or exchange them. They will collect the dividends accruing, which they will convert within the three days following payment into French government bearer bonds, unless the other parties decide on another investment. They will at all times allow Messrs. Crawford or their representatives to inspect these securities. M. and Mme. Humbert pledge their word of honour not to depart from this agreement without the consent of Messrs. Crawford. Should they fail in the execution of a single clause, they will forfeit all claim to any part of the estate, in which case Messrs. Crawford would be bound only to pay the thirty thousand francs a month to M. or Mme. Humbert. Paris, March 14th, 1883.

(Signed) Robert Crawford, Henry Crawford, Frédéric Humbert, Thérèse Humbert."

How, when, where, or to whom, this full statement of the Humbert-Crawford complex was first made, I have not been able to discover. To authors and other people unused to handling money, the agreement hardly sounds reassuring. It was too full of conditions. The courts, it was admitted, might have to determine the rights of the parties ; by a single rash act Mme. Humbert might meanwhile forfeit her claim. It may, therefore, be surmised that the compromise was disclosed only when vast credits had already been obtained and when the creditors had become thereby directly interested in keeping the debtor going. It is a curious commentary on the established reputation of the French people for sagacity and nearness in money manners that bankers and professional financiers should have advanced millions of francs on the security of a will, the original of which no one ever asked to see ; the will, moreover, of a man utterly unknown in France and whose death certificate was never produced !

Within the quarter of a century ending in 1902, Thérèse Humbert, justly called the Great, succeeded in raising upwards of three million pounds sterling. As a defence and explanation of her position, the treaty with the Crawfords could not be bettered. Here was a woman, already moving in the highest official circles, whose father-in-law died in 1894, a member of the Cour des Comptes, who would almost certainly become in a few years the richest woman in France—to lend her money at high interest, to make a friend of her, was surely good policy ; yet, to satisfy the most pressing duns, to bail herself out of prison, if needs were, she dared not negotiate any one of those securities in her safe under penalty of losing that very fortune ! Once you believed her

story, you not only appreciated her perplexities but you sympathised. You were shown a mighty safe, built into the wall of a cabinet adjoining the conjugal bedroom. Behind its iron doors lay a fortune of four millions sterling, which she could not touch. "You will be glad, eh?" said a friend, "when you enter into possession of your wealth?" Mme. Humbert snapped her fingers. "Give me back rather my youth and beauty," was her aspiration, "that I may continue to be loved. Not that I have any reason to complain. My husband loves me as much as it is possible for any one to love another here below." But she went on raising the despised dross by the ton, one might say.

"Ze suis poursuivie par les méchants!" she would exclaim in her uncouth, lisping speech. For the Crawfords no longer abided by the spirit of the agreement. They had become actively hostile. They threatened; they pestered her to make her sister marry one of them—it did not matter which. But Mlle. Marie was coy. The parties came to exchanging writs. The Crawfords proved amazingly elusive. They flitted about, popped up here and there like Jack-in-the-box. In 1884, Mme. Humbert called on M. Lecomte, a *huissier* (a superior sort of bailiff) at Vanves, in the suburbs of Paris, and instructed him to serve a writ on Mr. Crawford, who, as she presently advised him by telegram, he would find at the Hotel du Louvre; and sure enough, at that address, the process server found a gentleman who answered to the name and accepted service. M. Hueber, a *huissier* at Le Havre, was less fortunate. Instructed by Maître Aymé, a solicitor of Paris, to serve another writ on Mr. Crawford at an address in the town in a very mean street, he found that a person of the name was indeed known at the house, but only occupied an unfurnished room. The *huissier* did

not deem this a proper domicile and returned the writ to the sender. The credit of running the mysterious millionaire to earth belongs to Maître Dupuy, a notary of Bayonne. Calling, according to his instructions, at the Hotel du Commerce, he had Mr. Crawford pointed out and identified by the hotel staff and served him with the writ. So no one could blame poor Mme. Humbert for not doing her utmost to bring her strange co-heirs to bay.

Annoyed, no doubt, by these invasions of their privacy, the brothers hit back. Maître Dumort, a respected notary of Rouen, received by letter instructions from them to take all sorts of proceedings against Mme. Humbert, copies of the will and the agreement being enclosed, together with a list of the securities in the safe. In October, 1885, Parmentier, a notary at Le Havre, who had been brought into the case by Dumort, actually saw one of the Crawfords at a hotel. He described him as a tall ordinary-looking Yankee who wore a goatee. Le Havre was chosen as the spot for directing operations because it was a port of call for the transatlantic liners—and the millionaire nephews were birds of passage, spending most of their time on the broad Atlantic, with that taste for a simple vagrant existence which poor rich men profess but are so seldom able to gratify. They were here to-day and gone to-morrow. "But how," the notaries were one day asked by the magistrates, "could you have consented to act for clients who had no proper domicile, whose identity had not been legally established?" (In France, you must remember, no man's existence is believed in unless he can adduce stamped documents to prove it—the evidence of other people's senses is no proof of your existence). To which the men of law replied: "They pay—therefore they are." They paid indeed most liberally. Their fees kept their solicitors

in clover. But their method of paying was odd. Dumort or Parmentier would be directed to call at some hotel in Paris and there an unknown person would hand him an envelope containing hundreds of banknotes. But it was good money.

Certainly, the other side had no doubt about their mysterious clients. Mme. Humbert took up the challenge offered and instructed the ablest lawyers in the capital to defend her. At times, however, she was obliged to ask her legal opponents to bear out her statement as to the sources and extent of the wealth confided to her ; which Dumort and Parmentier, agreeably to the Crawfords' written permission, obligingly did. The money was there all right, they assured creditors. Unhappily, however, it was the subject of litigation between Mme. Humbert and their distinguished client. The lawyers rubbed their hands. The will of the late Mr. Crawford was proving a gold mine to their profession. They cannot be blamed for keeping the ball rolling. And roll backwards and forwards it did for the next twenty years, from court to court, up to the Court of Cassation and down again, every decision being appealed, as the Americans say, every expedient of hindrance or mystification known to French law being resorted to on both sides. A tower of strength on the Humbert side was Maître Du Buit, one of the leading counsel of France, a Huguenot, and a figure as grave and respectable as Gustave Humbert or John Calvin himself. He had no doubts about the genuineness of the business. The papers had been handed over to him upon the death of another and equally respectable barrister. The Humbert case was as well established an institution as the Dreyfus case. Sucking counsel were apprenticed to it, and grew up, never reading or studying anything else.

It might have been thought by those who remembered the

beginnings of the affair, now in the dim past, that the whole thing could be settled by Mlle. Marie Daurignac's giving her hand to one or other of her inveterate suitors. But the young lady sustained victoriously a siege twice as long as Troy's. She was one of the few—the very few—who had seen Crawford. As Thérèse afterwards informed a woman friend, she pointed him out to her sister while they were out driving and he drove past in the opposite direction. At dinner that night, before friends, Thérèse asked the comparatively young Marie: "Well, you have seen him—what do you think of him?" To which Marie made answer: "Oh, he's all right. I may have him after all." When this half-hearted acceptance was repeated outside, the Humbert creditors made merry and Humbert stocks rose all round. "Crawford" then or at another time wrote to Parmentier, announcing that everything was settled, that he was going to marry Mlle. Daurignac, and hoped he would come to the wedding. And then some mysterious hitch occurred. Ten years later, Thérèse told her friend that the wedding really would take place next day, and invited her friend to go upstairs to inspect Marie's trousseau. But for some reason the invitation was not pressed. The whole mansion reverberated with preparations for the wedding feast. But alas! the incorrigible Marie, now well on in her thirties, again changed her mind.

Naturally, the Crawfords were exasperated. The owner of five or six millions sterling does not reckon on being jilted some round dozen of times by a chit of thirty-six. If actions for breach of promise were known to French law, it would have gone hard with Marie Daurignac—"the eternal fiancée," as she was styled by those who had studied the case. Consider, too, that both brothers had kept single these twenty years past, in spite, as we must believe, of many temptations,

waiting for her to throw the handkerchief. Mr. Crawford must be excused for writing letters to his sympathetic lawyers, describing Mme. Humbert in the most offensive terms. He got nasty, too. Every time that Thérèse appealed to him on behalf of her creditors, imploring him to let her open the safe and pay a trifle—say, a mere half million—on account, he put his foot down. No, since he (or his brother, it didn't matter which) couldn't have the supremely desirable Marie, she shouldn't touch a penny of his uncle's wealth. He would have the law of her if she opened that safe.

But Maître Du Buit was not going to stand nonsense of that sort. France was a civilized country. Did this rough transatlantic person suppose that any French judge would force a weeping, reluctant young girl, not yet forty, into his arms? This time the Crawfords were frightened. They agreed to surrender all their interests in the will for the sum of six million francs. Thérèse asked her delighted creditors to help her find the money. But before it could be got together, Parmentier and Dumort, upon their client's instructions, had wrung an injunction out of the High Court and quashed this particular compromise. It really was too bad.

It is comforting to know that throughout this harassing time Thérèse had the warm support of her brothers, Romain and Emile Daurignac. The former had spent some time in the Argentine Republic, where, it was afterwards suggested, he might have made the acquaintance of a poor school teacher named Crawford, shortly before, by an odd coincidence, the name cropped up in the Humbert affairs. A shrewd man of business was Romain, the trusted lieutenant of his elder sister, but, unlike her, addicted to the softer frailties. Frédéric Humbert complained from time to time to his father and mother of Thérèse's endless lawsuits, and expressed a wish

for a quiet life. He wrote verse, some of it quite good. He also found time to sit in parliament on the Boulangist side. Not only was Thérèse an exemplary wife, but she was a devoted if over-strict mother. Eve, the only child of the marriage, lived in luxurious seclusion, like a Turkish girl. No one was ever allowed to speak to her alone. Some people must have thought it strange that she was never suggested as a bride for one of the Crawfords in place of the intractable Marie.

All this while the Humberts lived as if they were already possessed of the millions. Near Melun, Thérèse had a fine country seat, Les Vives Eaux, where on one occasion she entertained M. Tirard and his whole Cabinet. But the neighbours fought rather shy of the Humberts. Process servers were always trying to fight their way into Vives Eaux and distress was often levied, to be got rid of somehow the next day.

But the financial world believed in Mme. Humbert and the Crawford millions. Schotsman of Lille, whose brother was mysteriously murdered in a train, advanced her as much as £280,000. Her credit with the shops in the Rue de la Paix was inexhaustible. So was her liberality. To the girls who fitted her for a costume she gave two hundred pounds in tips ! Though high finance was her particular hunting-ground, she did not always despise lesser game. A jeweller named Dumoret was one day invited by a Jewish acquaintance to make a diamond brooch, worth about a hundred thousand francs, which Mme. Humbert would be sure to purchase as a wedding present for her sister, now for the fiftieth time on the point of marrying Mr. Crawford. As it happened, the jeweller was short of diamonds. The Jew procured him some for the price of seventy-five thousand francs. The brooch

was bought by Mme. Humbert *on credit*, and promptly pawned by her for forty thousand francs. As the diamonds sold by her Jewish confederate had been bought on credit also, she and the Hebrew cleared one hundred and fifteen thousand francs over this transaction alone.

Jewels often figure in her story. She was wearing a rope of pearls when the *huissiers* appeared and proceeded to distrain upon her furniture. The hour was late. Mme. Humbert was sweeping indignantly from the room when her rope caught in a button of the bailiff's coat and was broken. The pearls were scattered over the floor. Down went the bailiffs on their knees to recover them. But the most precious of the pearls could not be found. Mme. Humbert wept and protested. In the midst of the hubbub five o'clock struck, after which hour it was illegal to levy execution. Mme. Humbert was saved again.

Through her father-in-law she had made powerful friends in official circles. A M. Jacquin, of the Conseil d'Etat, was to achieve unenviable notoriety by his intimacy with her household. Her husband's family connexions allied her to the orthodox republican party. Thérèse herself, affected a simple piety and was understood to sympathise with the Church, just then on the eve of a fierce persecution. Thus she had friends in both camps. A religious paper supported her new venture, the Rente Viagère, an insurance society with fine offices in the Rue Auber. "Which of us," ran the puff, "has not lamented that the smallness of his income has prevented his helping in some good work? Yet, in the autumn of one's life it would be sweet to lavish one's fortune on others, and not to be turned aside by sordid material cares from what should be our supreme occupation—working for our soul's salvation." England's patriotic arch-swindler,

the soldiers' friend, could hardly have bettered that ! The almanac published by the company was illuminated with portraits of the Pope, President Loubet, and President Kruger ! So the Rente Viagère, of which the Daurignac brothers were directors, flourished exceedingly, apparently, and the premiums paid to insure people in their declining years were promptly transferred to the house in the Avenue de la Grande Armée to retrieve the tottering fortunes of the great Thérèse.

For they always were tottering on the brink of ruin. The obstinacy of the Crawfords, the recalcitrancy of Mme. Humbert, frequently goaded her creditors to frenzy. The banker, Schotsman of Lille, insisted on a settlement. "You have come at the right moment," Romain told him. "My sister has made an offer to the Crawfords, and as you are her chief creditor you had better take part in the conference." Ushered into the adjoining room, the financier found Mme. Humbert in conference with Parmentier and Dumort. She offered the Crawfords, through their legal representatives, eight hundred thousand sterling to surrender their claims. Parmentier had his written instructions to demand twice that sum. "Don't you pay it, madam," screamed Schotsman. "Go on with the case. I will back you up."

There were moments when the distracted woman declared she had no patience with the Crawfords. To outwit them she had had special envelopes prepared to contain the securities which could be opened without breaking the seals. One or two select friends were thus able to obtain a glimpse of documents which looked like bonds and shares and mortgages. Maître Dumort, representing the other side, had, of course, a right to see much more, and afterwards gave evidence that he had spent a whole afternoon counting

dividend warrants which must have totalled seven hundred thousand francs in value. Some of these must have been borrowed for the occasion ; others came from the Rente Viagère ; others, it is suggested, were forged at some private printing press. But the agent of a Belgian bank who wanted to peep inside the safe was told to come again on the day appointed for detaching the coupons—a date which was never fixed. By a supplementary convention with the Crawfords, the conversion of the dividends into French rentes was to be conducted by a broker whose name was not to be revealed ! As Alice remarked, curiouiser and curiouiser !

La Grande Thérèse was a very kind-hearted woman. She would not harm a fly and was very kind to animals. She loved, as we have seen, to be generous, and went on her way showering largess on her friends and everybody in a dependent position. It must have pained her very much when, through the complexity of our social system, she found some humble victim caught in her wide-flung net. A widow, named Guillard, one day fired shots at her window, crying out that she had been swindled and ruined. The poor creature was removed to a lunatic asylum. But the unfortunate tragedy of M. Girard could not be hushed up. He was partner in a firm of bankers at Elbeuf, and had lent Mme. Humbert two hundred and forty-eight thousand pounds on the strength of her expectations. The transaction weighed so heavily on his mind that he shot himself, assuring his partners, touchingly enough, in his last letter that he still had confidence in the affair and that they would certainly get their money back.

The shot that killed Girard fired the mine beneath the Humbert safe. The liquidators of the bank, represented by Maître Duret, began to give trouble. Maître Du Buit was

pressed very hard to explain his client's position. Upon the liquidator's petition the court directed Mme. Humbert to open the safe and use the funds therein contained, on condition that she paid six million francs to the Crawfords under the agreement of 1886. Perhaps Thérèse had lost the key or forgotten the combination which opened the lock. Strange to say, she was in no hurry to enter into the enjoyment of her treasure. She had given her word of honour to the Americans not to open that safe without their consent. And they would not consent. They entered an appeal against the court's decision; and that appeal the Humberts took no steps to oppose.

This was strange, very strange, thought Maître Duret; and that eminent counsel, Waldeck-Rousseau, whom he briefed, shared his suspicions. The Press got hold of the case. Everyone was asking: Who are the Crawfords? where do they live? has anybody ever seen them?

To which the Crawford solicitors replied categorically: They are rich but eccentric millionaires; their permanent address is 1202 and 1302 Broadway, New York City; they have been seen by Maître Parmentier and Maître Dupuy. They won't come into France because the last time they attended a conference at Mme. Humbert's they were served with a writ. Duret noted the information and took steps . . .

The case entered on a new phase at Elbeuf. Waldeck-Rousseau found himself opposed not only by Maître Pouillet, for the Crawfords, but by Maître Du Buit for the Humberts. Amazing, exclaimed the advocate. I am here to ask for the dismissal of the Crawfords' appeal and to enable Mme. Humbert to get possession of her inheritance, and I find myself opposed by Mme. Humbert herself! Despite the

interruptions and protests of Du Buit, he said, almost in a few words, that the brothers Crawford had no existence. He produced (sensation in court) two sworn declarations from New York. A notary public certified that he had enquired for Mr. Crawford at 1202 Broadway and found that the address was that of a hotel, the Gilsey House, the manager of which certified that no person of the name of Crawford had ever stayed there. As to 1302 Broadway, there was no such house, the space between the numbers 1298 and 1328 being occupied by a public garden. Was it to be concluded that the multi-millionaires roosted in the trees or had their abode on the benches in the park? Maître Pouillet threw up his brief. Mme. Humbert was ordered to pay the bank what she owed; and by some mysterious means she succeeded in doing so.

But it was now impossible to stave off the other creditors. A vigorous Press campaign was started against her. One of her most intimate friends tells us that she received a warning to break with her; which she did, without communicating the warning to others. That was now unnecessary. Foremost among Thérèse's enemies was a small banker named Cattau. He dunned her and she retaliated by charging him with usury and having his books examined. Another application was made to the courts in the name of Crawford. The judge called the counsel into his private room and questioned them very seriously as to the identity of their clients. And then, to set all doubts at rest, Maître Du Buit, on behalf of his clients, M. and Mme. Frédéric Humbert, agreed to an order that the safe should be opened and its contents inventoried in the presence of the judge and the procureur de la République on the following Friday, May 8th, 1902.

Thérèse was waiting in her carriage outside the Palais de

Justice when her counsel came out and told her what had been agreed. It is said she never turned a hair, but thanked her advocate and expressed her relief that this scandalous and vexatious litigation would at last terminate. She would go down into the country, she said, to prepare herself for the excitement and triumph of the great day. The great Thérèse surely was never so great as at this moment, when she thanked and smiled upon the man who, without knowing it, had sold the pass, surrendered the last entrenchment to the enemy. The next news was worse. The indignant Cattau, enraged by the violation of his offices, had lodged a charge of swindling against her. The criminal procedure of France knows no such delays and expedients as the civil. Thérèse knew that she might be arrested at any moment and kept under lock and key at the mercy of a magistrate. That day she pawned her jewels for forty thousand francs. It is to her credit that she called at a smart dressmaker's and paid three thousand francs cash for a couple of costumes which she had ordered to be sent as a present to Du Buit's daughters. Nor did she forget her servants, leaving seven thousand francs for their wages with Mme. Parayre, whom some one has called her familiar spirit. "We are going in the country for a couple of days," she told the household, "we shan't want the carriage." She would not allow her daughter the time to pack a suit-case. Then they all—Thérèse and Frédéric, Eve, the daughter; Marie, the sister, and Romain, the brother, walked over to the Obligado station on the Metro. and—disappeared! Emile Daurignac and his wife went to the Opera that night, and disappeared next morning. Poor old Mme. Humbert, senior, the senator's widow, received that day a brooch, with the scribbled word *Pardon*, from her daughter-in-law. She wondered what the note referred to.

She was soon to understand.

On the fateful day, at the appointed hour, M. Jules Huret, reporter for the *Figaro*, found a small crowd collected at the doors of the mansion in the Avenue de la Grande Armée. He caught the whisper : “ They have gone ! All of them ! ” There was much ribald laughter, several low persons seeming to take the discomfiture of the most respectable banking corporations as a good joke ; for in France wealth does not always command that respect and sympathy which are so readily accorded it in certain other countries. Passing himself off as a creditor with the audacity of his kind, the journalist penetrated into the very arcanum of the great mystery. Two locksmiths were at work on the safe, and had already made a hole against the lock. There were about fifteen people in the room ; among them was Maître Du Buit, who seemed a prey to suppressed agitation. The lock fell and the smiths flung open the heavy doors. “ There’s nothing inside,” exclaimed some one. Du Buit, leaning against the table and peering forward, repeated : “ There is nothing ! ” (*Il n’y a rien !*)

But there was something. The safe contained a number of cardboard boxes and an open ledger. The magistrate opened the boxes one by one. They contained such odds and ends as a shoe buckle, a few pins, and a bracelet. Maître Du Buit examined them. “ No value,” he said, in an expressionless voice. A servant approached and pointed to an envelope on the topmost shelf of the safe. “ That’s where they used to be,” she said. “ What ? ” “ The securities—in envelopes.” “ You have seen them ? ” “ Oh, many times.” M. Huret had seen enough. He made his way out to announce to Paris and the world the end of the Humbert mystery, the dissipation of the Phantom Millions. The

twenty-five years' conspiracy, the greatest fraud of the century, was exposed.

The person for whom one feels most sorry was old Mme. Humbert, the senator's widow. Hitherto maintained in luxury by her son, she found herself reduced to something like penury. To the reporters who besieged her, she ceased not to insist that her son, her Frédéric, could only have been the dupe of Thérèse—that he was as incapable of dishonesty as his father before him. But while the old lady was bemoaning the ruin of her family and more bitterly still, the loss of her beloved granddaughter, Eve, she was struck by the cruellest blow of all. In their eagerness to turn the scandal to political advantage, the Clericals and Conservatives did not scruple to assail the fame of her dead husband and to insinuate that the incorruptible republican had started the whole swindle. Mme. Humbert, old as she was, took up his defence. When pressed, the Conservative gentlemen were unable to substantiate their charges, and, possibly, though improbably, had decency enough left to regret their attack on a dead man.

Some sympathy must be reserved, too, for the lawyers. Maître Du Buit was overwhelmed with shame. He who had so long sported the white flower of a blameless life realised that he had acted for years as the catspaw of a gang of thieves. Parmentier and Dumort were arrested and examined. In the course of a protracted examination they were able to satisfy their judges that they had been deceived like the rest, that whatever doubts they might have had about the integrity and solvency of their opponents, the Humberts, they had no serious grounds for questioning the existence and bona fides of their clients, the Crawfords ; though it may seem to some that the discovery of the spurious address

might have opened their eyes. It was soon pretty well established that on the rare occasions when the mysterious millionaires had condescended to materialize themselves, it had been in the persons of Romain and Emile Daurignac. Another interesting fact was revealed by the police enquiry. Thérèse and Frédéric had a secret domicile in the Rue de Douai, where they passed under the name of Lelong. Neighbours supposed that M. Lelong was in politics. There was a crop of the minor intimate scandals which seem inseparable from financial and criminal cases in France. Romain kept up a separate establishment—his mistress was unearthed and interrogated. While Maître Parmentier was under examination, his son, whom he had expelled from his home for misconduct, attempted to blackmail him, and was arrested, also in the company of a mistress.

The Rente Viagère was wound up without many assets having been discovered. The whole of France was ransacked for the Humberts' assets. When these were realized it was found they still owed the respectable total of £1,960,000 sterling. The stability of many firms must have been shaken ; but there was no such widespread misery and ruin as have attended similar colossal frauds in other countries. Thérèse had robbed the rich—a fact appreciated by a Socialist deputy who observed in the Chamber that he and his party were not greatly distressed by her operations. Meanwhile, where were the Humberts ? The factions of the " Right " shouted that the Ministry had connived at their escape. The Minister of Justice, it was alleged, dared not put them on their trial—they dreaded revelations. The attack culminated in a scene in the Chamber on December 7th, 1902. The Conservatives charged the government with having circulated spurious photographs of the fugitives in order to avert their detection.

The Ministry charged the reactionaries with trying to turn every scandal happening in France to the discredit of the republic, and reminded the interpellators that Frédéric Humbert had been a Boulangist partisan. Presently, fifty deputies were fighting and rolling on the floor of the House, punching each others' noses and tearing each others' hair. The Chamber was at last cleared by the Republican Guard, not before challenges had been exchanged between the Minister of Justice, M. Vallé, and a nationalist deputy named Syveton.

And only thirteen days later, that is, on December 20th, the Humberts were arrested in Madrid.

They had gone there straight from Paris and attracted no notice on their arrival, as Madrid was crowded with visitors come to witness the enthronement of the young king. The fugitives had purposed to proceed to South America, but they decided that the ports were too well watched. So they gave themselves out to be Belgians, and took a flat in a quiet residential street, the Calle de Ferraz. Command was taken by Romain. He grew mutton-chop whiskers, then the fashion in Spain, and passed as the husband of his sister, Marie—the eternal fiancée. Eve was supposed to be her father's wife. Emile posed as a doctor, and prescribed for a sick Spanish neighbour with a success which the real medical men had not achieved. The refugees seldom went out, but that would excite little remark in a country where women and elderly men pass most of their time looking out of the window and watching the younger members of the family grow up. It was probably Eve's unusual tallness—she was over six feet—that first caused people to look curiously at the foreigners. Encouraged by the French government's promise of a thousand pounds reward, a neighbour informed the police.

The house was surrounded, and the Humberts, seeing the game was up, admitted their identity. Transferred with her sister and daughter to the model prison, Thérèse refused all credit to the Spanish police for the arrest, alleging that her whereabouts had been known all the time to the Minister of Justice in Paris, and that she would have gone back to face the music whenever required. On the way back to France she abused Romain roundly, calling him *cochon* and *fainéant*. They all said they were glad to get back to dear old Paris. They got back on a pouring wet day in December and were clapt into gaol. Eve was promptly set at liberty and found a refuge with her grandmother. She moaned incessantly for her father, to whom, after the manner of French girls, she was specially devoted. The thousand pounds reward, it should be added, was awarded after much argument, to a Señor Costarello, and handed over by him to an orphanage. The Spanish police showed a like delicacy of sentiment and disposed in the same manner of their share of the blood-money.

The French government were interested in disproving their complicity in the fraud, and steps were taken to expedite the trial. Romain and Emile were identified at the conciergerie by Dupuy, the Bayonne notary, as the persons who had answered to the name of Crawford. The Humberts won the preliminary skirmish with the banker, Cattai, who had sued them for libel. The jury found that Thérèse and Frédéric had not acted in bad faith when they accused him of usury. Thus encouraged, Thérèse, her husband, and two brothers—Marie Daurignac had been set at liberty—faced the assize court of the Seine on August 8th, 1903.

Thérèse is described on this occasion by the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* as “a dark woman of comfortable

dimensions, with sallow complexion, black hair, well-marked eyebrows, small black eyes that seemed to take in everything at a glance, irregular but not disagreeable features—the type of the ordinary Frenchwoman of the south. She was attired in black, the only articles in the shape of finery being a bunch of white flowers in her hat, a foulard of white tulle, and white gloves on hands which were not of aristocratic mould. Verily, a typical *petite bourgeoise* from Toulouse.” Frédéric looked haggard and as if he feared the worst. Romain had the air of a professor. The accused were defended by Maître Labori, the brilliant defender of Dreyfus.

The trial dragged on till August 22nd. Much patience and good humour were shown by the presiding judge. Indeed, no one evinced any excessive bitterness against the prisoners. Parmentier stuck to it that the Crawford with whom he had spoken at Le Havre was not Romain or Emile ; his colleague, Dumort, was equally emphatic that he had seen and handled the script. “ But where are the Crawfords then ? ” cried the perplexed magistrate. “ Where is the script ? ” “ That I will tell you presently,” Thérèse assured him, “ when the jury has acquitted us. We are honest people.” The judge reproached Frédéric with having tarnished the name of his honoured father. Everybody wept. “ I would not have tarnished it for a million millions,” protested the son. “ My position in this affair,” he wearily explained, “ may be likened to that of a cat in the water. You see it swimming, but from that you mustn’t conclude it went into the water on its own account.” But in spite of this admission, the four accused persons presented a solid front to the prosecution and made no attempt to escape at each other’s expense. Every half hour or so the proceedings were varied by an attack on the Ministry of the day, though it was proved

to have as little to do with the case as the proverbial flowers that bloom in the spring.

But Maître Labori's eloquence and lawcraft were wasted. He could not produce the Crawfords, he could not produce the famous will; worst of all, he could not produce the wonderful securities. Finally, the jury were called upon for their findings. They had to answer upwards of two hundred and sixty questions submitted by the judge. The verdict was "Guilty." The time had come for Thérèse's supreme effort, for the sensational revelations she had promised.

She spoke, as might be expected, tremulously and incoherently. Why wasn't the fortune in the safe when it was opened? She had abstracted a portion of it to help a friend, a M. Bernard, who was in sore need and had helped her on a previous occasion. "Then the Crawfords came down, pitiless, relentless!" The court intended to sequester the treasure. To save it, they took it away, every bond and share. They promised (it is not clear why) to restore it. Thérèse telegraphed, telephoned here, there and everywhere. They did not come up to the scratch. They were gone—but standing there in the dock, she was sure they would yet refund the millions.

And now came the final sensation. Who were the Crawfords? Why did they fear the light of day? Thérèse must now pronounce a name abhorred by all Frenchmen. That name—the real name of the Crawfords—was Regnier!

The bomb failed to explode. People looked at each other repeating the fatal name, and asked: Who was Regnier? Then some remembered. He was the busybody who thrust himself into the intrigues or negotiations that resulted in the capitulation of Metz in 1870. The Crawford millions, Thérèse darkly hinted, were tainted money—the price



MADAME HUMBERT

(After the drawing by M. Feuillet, reproduced by permission of *The Sphere*)

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received by Bazaine and Regnier for the great betrayal. But everybody in court knew that the Marshal had died poor, and as a few perhaps knew, Regnier died the keeper of a laundry at Ramsgate, in 1886.¹

Still, it was not a bad yarn, and may have put the court in a good humour. At any rate, the sentences were the lightest that could, under the code, be imposed. Thérèse and Frédéric were sentenced, each to five years' reclusion, Romain and Emile Daurignac to four and three years respectively. And so the great Humbert Swindle reached its formal conclusion.

The *affaire* had been already debated exhaustively so that there remained little to say. But as there remained believers in the Tichborne imposture, so even among the hard-headed French a few believers in the millions were to be heard on the boulevards. One of these propounded a theory much more convincing than the Regnier story. At the time of the Commune, an enormous quantity of treasury bonds was abstracted or destroyed. When the total amount had been verified in 1875, the bonds were cancelled and declared non-negotiable. But such a nullification under French law can be effective only for a period of thirty years. The Humbert treasure, it was suggested, was composed of these vanished securities. If produced at any time within thirty years they would be confiscated and destroyed; but in 1905 they would be the lawful property of the holder, genuine bills drawn upon the State. . . .

But the year 1905 came and passed without the Crawfords giving any sign. In fact, those retiring persons have never

¹ Bazaine was a soldier who preferred his king to his country. He thought a German occupation of France preferable to a socialistic republic. Regnier was another imperialist enthusiast. For further details consult, Welschinger, *La Guerre de 1870. Causes et Responsabilités*.

been seen or heard of since the trial. They did not trouble to meet Thérèse when she was let out of prison at Rennes on the morning of September 13th, 1906. But Brother Romain was there to meet her and took her in a cab to the Hotel Moderne, where lunch was served. Frédéric, released at the same moment from his prison at Thouars, was hastening to meet her, with the rest of the family, at a Norman sea-side resort. Thus happily reunited, the Humberts and Daurignacs (I don't know whether Marie was still engaged) must have enjoyed a hearty laugh at the gullibility of bankers and lawyers.

No doubt they had saved enough during their fat years to be able, as the Americans say, to have an egg with their tea. Her imagination and her taste for crime should have qualified her for a writer of the crime stuff so popular to-day. However, it seems she still prefers the more dubious paths of finance. This is to be inferred from the following extract from the London *Daily Chronicle* (May 23rd, 1927) :

“ The name of Thérèse Humbert was mentioned again in the Paris courts yesterday

A Parisian widow named Mme. Labry, the daughter of a former housekeeper of Anatole France, was claiming from a Mlle. Saulnier a sum of 6,300 francs, the amount of a loan she granted in 1913, not to Mlle. Saulnier, but to Thérèse Humbert.

Just before, the woman, La Grande Thérèse, and her brother, Romain Daurignac (who was a prominent figure in the famous Humbert case), were in financial difficulties.

They could no longer have recourse to the safe trick and the Crawford will, but they told their friend, Mlle. Saulnier, that they were interested in big railway works in Brazil, and expected large profits at an early date.

Meanwhile they were in need of a sum of 6,300 francs. Mlle. Saulnier introduced Mme. Humbert and her brother to her friend, Mme. Lambry.

They used convincing arguments, and the latter agreed to lend them the money they wanted ; but apparently the lender was not totally convinced of the bona fides of Thérèse, as she carefully insisted that Mlle. Saulnier should guarantee the refunding of the loan.

She did so, and must have felt sorry for it since, for, Thérèse Humbert having failed to pay her debt, she had been called upon to pay it.

The Court decided that Mlle. Saulnier must repay Mme. Labry the sum of 6,300 francs lent to Thérèse Humbert, plus interest of the same since 1913.

In giving judgment the judge remarked that Mlle. Saulnier may, if she likes, sue Thérèse Humbert and her brother for repayment of the sum."

But if Mlle. Saulnier is wise, she won't.

THE END

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